CHURCHDOWN
THROUGH
THE AGES

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CHURCHDOWN THROUGH THE AGES

by

J. J. D. Cooke, M.A.,
Vicar of Churchdown 1901—1935

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With Illustrations

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FOREWORD
by
The Right Reverend A. J. Hodson,
Bishop of Tewkesbury (Archdeacon of Gloucester)

THE CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW TAKEN FROM AN OLD PRINT 1791.

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FOREWORD.

The Author of this History has honoured me in asking me to write a Foreword to his book. I do so very gladly, because it happened that my uncle, the Rev. H. E. Hodson, came to reside in Churchdown, about the time when Mr. Cooke began his long, and I hope he will allow me to add, his fruitful ministry among its people. I have therefore a very vivid recollection of people and things in Churchdown thirty years ago.

Mr. Cooke has set an example, in reviving interest in the story of the past, which might well be more widely followed. History stands in the same relationship to the nation, as memory to the individual. It preserves identity and continuity. Just as, in the individual, loss of memory is a sign of mental failure and instability: so in the Community, to forget what we owe to the past, is a sure indication of social and national disintegration. To cultivate the future at the expense of the past, which is characteristic of so many would-be reformers, is really fatal to all genuine progress. We can only interpret the future aright, as we have a firm hold on the past. In a rapidly changing age like ours, the painstaking recovery of historical records is a duty of first-rate importance: and perhaps no one is better qualified to undertake it, than the Parson of the Parish, whose learning and opportunities specially equip him for the task.

Mr. Cooke has modestly acknowledged the debt which he owes to his predecessors and contemporaries in the same field of research. I would like to take this opportunity of paying my tribute to the memory of one of them in particular, Mr. W. T. Swift, for many years the village Schoolmaster, who in his day exercised a very great influence over the rising generation. Mr. Swift was a man of wide culture and deep religious conviction: and, in days when the relation between the village School and the village Church, and between the village Schoolmaster and the village Parson, was much closer than it often is to-day, Mr. Swift left his mark on the Parish. That is a tradition which has largely passed away. It would be to the advantage both of religion and of education if it were revived.

I hope Mr. Cooke's History of Churchdown will be widely read, and that it may inspire similar efforts elsewhere.

JOHN TEWKESBURY.

PREFACE.

When I was leaving Churchdown in 1935 some of my old friends begged me to write the story of Churchdown from early times. I felt very diffident about promising to do this. Our respected Schoolmaster, the late Mr. W. T. Swift, wrote a useful handbook of the parish in 1905, but it has been out of print for many years. Dr. R. W. Murray has more recently written a carefully compiled account of the old Church. My friends assured me that a more general history of the parish would be appreciated.

As I had the time, during my convalescence from a long illness, I made the venture. My regret is that I have not told the story in a more interesting way.

I have added a few notes on general history, particularly on Gloucestershire at certain periods, thinking these would enable readers to picture the Churchdown setting more clearly. These are printed in smaller type than the Churchdown story.

Churchdown to-day is no longer a country village. Many of the old landmarks have passed away. The new industries and fresh interests, no doubt, are the special concern of the residents. Yet I hope it may be of interest to all to be reminded that Churchdown through the ages, as the charming old name "Chosen" suggests, has been a favoured spot, a place of some importance, and not merely an isolated and almost unknown little village.

I am especially indebted to Dr. R. W. Murray. He has contributed several interesting passages, collected much material, looked up records for me, and given me very helpful suggestions.

I gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Mrs. E. M. Clifford and the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for allowing me to make use of their pamphlet on the Roman Villa at the Noke, and to reproduce one photograph taken at the time of the excavation of the Villa.

I also thank Prof. Hamilton Thompson for allowing me to make use of his paper—"The Jurisdiction of York in Gloucestershire."

Some slight reference has been made to Sir F. A. Hyett's book—" Gloucester in National History."

Other sources of information I think need not be mentioned.

Since the manuscript has been placed in the hands of the printers, the catastrophe of war has come upon us. One fears that this is not an opportune moment to publish a local story, but it is now too late to postpone it.

J. J. D. Cooke.

" Wonwell,"

Highweek,

Newton Abbot,

Devon.

December, 1939.

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CHAPTER I.

THE NAME AND THE HILL.

CHURCHDOWN is midway between Gloucester and Cheltenham. Through it runs the main road between the two towns. It has its own joint Railway Station. It is now the joint air port and on the hill are two reservoirs, through which Gloucester and Cheltenham obtain their additional water supply.

The identity of Churchdown seems to be somewhat absorbed by the two important neighbouring towns.

But Churchdown has an interesting history of its own, and a much longer history than is generally realized.

There is, I think, no other place in the world that bears this name. A letter or cable addressed "Churchdown," certainly if sent within the British Empire, will in due course reach its destination.

The old Church on the Hill does not altogether explain the name. In Domesday Book it is written CIRCESDUNE. The meaning of that word is not easily discovered. Etymologists say definitely that Circes is not the old English word Circe, which means Church.*†

Circesdune is thought to be derived from the British word Crūc—a round hill; to this was added the old English word Dūn (Down)—high undulating ground. So Circesdune well describes the hill. "The Round Hill Down."‡

As there is no reason to suppose that there was a Church on the hill in A.D. 1089, we may presume that the name would have no connection with Church.

When the old Church was built, about A.D. 1170, it became the dominant feature of the Hill and the Village.

*Circe is a feminine noun and could not have a genitive in "s." The letter "s" appears consistently in the name for a long period.

†The Dictionary of English Place names (Eilbert Ekwall, Clarendon Press, 1936) has this note: "Churchdown. (Circesdune D.B. Kyrchesdon, 1190. Kyrchesdon, 1191. P. Chirchedon, 1221 Ep.) The place is a high round hill, which was evidently called Brit: Crūc, Welsh Crūg, hill, especially a round hill. To this was added an explanatory O.E. Dūn, hill."

‡"Chosen" is evidently a contraction of one of the variations of the name Churchdown—probably from Churson.

An old Scotch friend, when I told him I was going to Churchdown, said, "It is called Chosen, because people never die there. Remember if you get tired of life you will have to leave."

The name would then be changed to one signifying "The Church on the Down."

Circesdune does not appear in official documents after that date. There have been variations in the spelling, *e.g.* Chirchesdun, 1230; Chirchesdone, 1279; Chursdown, 1563; Churson, 1577; Chursdon, 1610; Chosedown, 1713; Church Down, 1700; Chosen, 1791—only used colloquially; but the meaning of the name is quite clear.

CHOSEN HILL.

It is the Hill, commonly called Chosen Hill, and the picturesque old Church on the North side of it, that give charm and interest to the Village. The Hill is a little outlier of the Cotswolds. The Downland, which we call the Top, 580 feet above sea level, is a marvellous spot. There we breathe the pure invigorating air coming up the Severn Estuary from the sea. We look across the extensive Severn Valley and see the grand hills in the distance. On a clear summer evening there is a superb panoramic picture, 40 miles or more in extent. As a background you have before you the Malvern Hills, the Abberley Hills, sometimes the Wrekin; Bredon Hill, Oxenton, Cleeve Hill, Leckhampton, Crickley, Cooper's Hill, Robinswood Hill in the Cotswold range. The River Severn as it opens into the Bristol Channel. The Dean Forest Hills, and May Hill. You look down upon the City of Gloucester, and its magnificent Cathedral stands out in splendid grandeur. Tewkesbury Abbey, sometimes Worcester Cathedral, and many an ancient Church can be seen.

The top of the hill is undulating downland, with many "Tumps," as the old folk call them, little hillocks which still bear curious names. On the South side is Devil's Oak Tump, on which once stood a famous Oak tree in solitary state. The story of the Oak is lost, but one who remembered it said, "It was very old, it had only three or four gnarled branches." Once a hard-pressed fox sprang on to a branch and defied hounds and huntsmen, none daring to approach him! Now a wood of firs and larch covers the Devil's Oak Tump. Near by is the Low Knoll, and above is the High Knoll. Going West along the Soldiers' Walk you come to the Kissing Tump, or the Zoons Tump, the Green Hill, Rabbits Hill, Saddle Hill, Tinkers Hill on which are the so-called Roman Steps. The tump below the Church is Howcroft, on the East side is Catsbrain.

There is no evidence to show that the Hill was occupied by people of the Stone Age. It is probable that the land around the hill, at that period, was marshland. Those primitive men living on the Cotswold hills probably often came here on hunting expeditions, *e.g.* from Crickley.

There are no signs of a Barrow, nor of any building older than the Norman Church.

A Camp is still marked on maps. Archaeologists now seem to be of opinion that no traces of an ancient camp are to be found, certainly not of a fortified one. For a long period much quarrying has been done on the hill, and recently extensive excavations have been made for the construction of two reservoirs for Gloucester and Cheltenham. It is probable that all outlines of a camp, if there ever were any, have now been destroyed.

In Roman times the Hill would have been part of the estate of the Roman Villa at the Noke. The terrace-like mounds on the South side suggest that it was terraced for fruit growing; that sunny and sheltered spot would be well adapted for the purpose.

The old road over the hill is thought to be a Roman track, and the Muzzle Well is still sometimes called the Roman Well.

That a Temple of Thor once stood on the site of the old Church is almost certainly a myth. Our English forefathers were not temple builders, and within about a hundred years Christianity was superseding paganism.

The Soldiers' Walk, a ridge running across the S.W. side of the hill, derives its name from the use made of it during the Siege of Gloucester in 1643. We may suppose that the hill was used by the Royalist Forces as an outpost. On the ridge, or near it, cannon balls of small size have been found. From it a clear view of the City, and of the roads leading to it would have been obtained.

As we ramble round Chosen Hill no doubt we wonder how and when it was formed. That is a very interesting but strictly geological subject, and so beyond the limits of our story. However, Dr. R. W. Murray has kindly contributed an interesting and simple geological idea about the gradual formation. I am sure it will be of general interest. He says :—

"The excavations on the hill-top to provide two reservoirs—one for Gloucester, and the other for Cheltenham—has interested

so many of our village people, that a brief and simple account of what probably happened in the long distant past is perhaps worth while.

The vast changes that took place in this part of England have been fully described by Mr. L. Richardson in his book 'The Geology of Cheltenham," from which the following has for the most part been taken.

Some millions of years ago, during what is known as the Cretaceous Period, a great part of England was under the sea. This was when the Chalk which now forms the Cliffs of Dover was deposited, and it is probable that an arm of a warm sea of the Red-sea type, extended as far West as where May Hill now stands.

This arm of the sea was shallow and muddy when the Marlstone, which now caps Chosen Hill, was deposited. At a later period the shallow water became clear and Coral reefs fringed its borders. After several up and down movements of the land there was a slow uprising of this area. This uprising of the land continued, quite apart from any volcanic action, until a great broad plain was formed, higher than the present top of Chosen Hill, extending from the Welsh Hills to near where London now stands, having a prevailing south-easterly dip. On this plain many streams and finally a river appeared, which would of necessity flow from West to East. This river and its tributaries would of course wash away a considerable quantity of earth and stone.

At a later period a change in the river system took place, the direction of the flow gradually changing from West to East to from North to South. A large river with many tributaries was formed, the course of which was that of the present Severn.

This great and ancient river Severn would, in the elapse of time, wash away immense quantities of rock and clay and would have little difficulty in carving out a broad valley in the soft Liassic Clay, and so our Severn Valley was formed.

Similar changes were taking place a little further east, where the river Thames was being developed. These two river-systems were not far apart and washed away an enormous quantity of earth and in our area the intervening land is now represented by the Cotswold Hills.

It would appear probable that the channel of this ancient river Severn swung from side to side of the Valley, so enlarging it laterally as well as downwards.

Bredon, Chosen and Robinswood Hills braved the torrent and were left standing island-like in the Valley, and were preserved from erosion by rain and other atmospheric agencies by their capping of hard Marlstone rock.

Numerous fossil remains, found embedded in the lime-stone rock, of creatures that lived and died millions of years ago on the spot where Chosen Hill was to be, is a very great help in determining the age and past history of our Hill. The earliest period we are now dealing with is known as the Jurassic Period, and was essentially an age of reptiles, which were undoubtedly the dominant animals on the land and in the sea. There was a group of creatures, ancestors of the Nautilus and Cuttle-fish, which are still

to be found in the Southern Seas, and numerous snail-like creatures known as Ammonites and Belomnites, as well as a number of sea-shells with long and puzzling Greek and Latin names, too numerous to mention. Fossil remains of most of these have been found in Chosen Hill. The dominant land reptiles of that time were various kinds of Dinosaurs walking on four legs, some of them relatively small creatures, others about 80 feet in length. When such a creature stood on its hind legs to eat leaves on the trees, it would indeed have been awe-inspiring.

The sea reptiles were crocodiles and the Ichthyosaurus, a carnivorous creature from ten to twenty feet in length with a large head, long pointed jaws and powerful teeth. There were also Tortoises and Turtles. In the air there were as yet no true birds but very strange creatures like bats, called Pterodactyls, which could fly a short distance by means of a membrane stretched between greatly elongated fingers. They were all small, about the size of a rook.

Fossil remains of some of the reptiles of that period found in Gloucestershire, are to be seen in our Museums, but none of their bones have been observed in the limestone rock on Chosen Hill.

With all these huge creatures on land and in the sea it must have been a strange yet probably silent world, for there were no birds to sing, no lions to roar; chattering apes and men were not to appear for ages, and apart from the gruntings and fighting cries of the Dinosaurs there were probably only the thunder storms and the rushing of the waters to break the silence.

The up or down movements of parts of England have by no means ceased. We have recently been reminded that the banks of the Thames not very far from London Bridge, are gradually sinking and that this has been going on, with occasional pauses, for 5,000 years. Since Tudor times, only 400 years ago, there has been a sinking of the banks of at least 8 feet, which may well account for occasional anxiety, as a tidal rise of the river five feet high above the present level would flood the best part of London and great tracts of country.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCHDOWN IN THE ROMAN AGE A.D. 50—420.

The inhabitants of Britain at that time were Britons, of Celtic race. The tall light-haired warriors were far removed from the painted savages pictured for us in our childhood days. These people were skilled in many arts and crafts, in metal and iron work. They had a gold coinage 150 years before the Christian era, specimens of these coins are in the British Museum. Their arts and crafts have been much admired by modern archaeologists. Phoenician traders procured their supplies of tin from the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall for centuries B.C. Corn, wheat and oats, were grown. Sheep and oxen were the chief source of wealth and means of barter. Horses drew the war chariots, and oxen drew the plough. Numerous herds of swine were in the virgin forests; red deer and other game abounded, and the wolf was a constant menace to the people and their flocks. Druidism was the prevailing religion. Julius Caesar was much impressed by the power of the Druids, which he considered greater in Britain than in Gaul. They had all the education in their hands, and administered justice in their courts.

The Roman occupation of Britain is an interesting period of our history, extending over about 400 years.

Julius Caesar, the great Roman Consul and General, twice came to Britain in B.C. 55 and 54. He did not really attempt to conquer the country; those two visits we might almost call "military reconnaisances." But they convinced him that Britain should be added to the Roman Empire. He "revealed Britain to Rome." His untimely death delayed the planned military expedition. It was nearly a hundred years later, in A.D. 43, that a strong military force, under Aulius Plautius, was sent. The greater part of the country was fairly rapidly subjugated. The Romans came to colonise, and to make the country a profitable colony, which would supply produce and money to the Empire. It was occupied systematically, according to well-arranged plans. Gloucestershire was to be an agricultural and industrial area. For a time, we might say, "Martial Law" was established, but it was primarily in order that the colonists might follow their civil pursuits in safety. Direct communication and transport were necessary for the success of the colonists. Great roads, throughout the country, were made; these were well planned, metalled with fixed stones, according to the general Roman practice. "Irmin Street" ran at the foot of Chosen Hill to the South, and is now the Gloucester and Cirencester road.

Gloucester (Glevum) and Cirencester (Corinium) soon became important Romans towns. Gloucester was built on the site of the British town of Caer Glow, which was entirely demolished. The new town of Glevum was built, on the recognised Roman plan. The main streets of Gloucester to-day follow the lines of the Roman streets. It was the key of the lower part of the Severn. At first it was the chief military centre of the west, and the

second Legion was stationed there. Later, a road was made across the Severn and beyond the Wye to Caerwent, and the second Legion moved there. Soon a move was made across the river Usk to Caerleon, which was made the Headquarters of two Roman Legions. Caerwent then became a residential town. Towards the end of the first century Gloucester was raised to the rank of a Colonia, which meant that the inhabitants were given the rights of Roman citizenship to as full an extent as they were ever given to foreigners. Its government must have been a copy in miniature of the Roman constitution, and in those days enjoyed a large share of local self-government. It would also exercise jurisdiction over a large tract of land surrounding it. As far as its municipal life was concerned, the city was a little republic, but its military and fiscal affairs were conducted by a Roman Empire official.

The advantageous position of Gloucester made it one of the chief trading-centres of the West of Britain. The mines of the Forest of Dean were near, and there was access to the corn-growing lands of the Vale, and the pastures of the Cotswolds. It is probable that, before the Roman times, iron, grain and wool were shipped from the port.

With the strategic points strongly held, and a few smaller military stations in the district, Gloucestershire would be a safe and pleasant land for the Roman settlers. The Britons were not driven away from their country; they were employed as labourers. The landworkers were slaves and bound to the land. The lot of the Britons, no doubt, was hard; they had lost their freedom; their masters were harsh and arrogant; but there was peace. They seem to have adapted themselves to the Roman civilisation then introduced to them. In the country districts, no doubt the old language survived, but a neo-Latin was, in time, generally spoken. In the towns, even the workmen were educated enough to read and write it, as we know from words they scribbled on tile and potsherd for amusement as they worked. An interesting "crossword," a palindrome, was found on a fragment of wall plaster at Cirencester:—

R O T A S
O P E R A
T E N E T
A R E P O
S A T O R

The natives of Britain continued to worship their old deities freely, together with the Roman gods. The Christian faith had reached this land in those early days, although it did not spread rapidly. Persecution of Christians was on a small scale, as they were a small body, but the martyrdom of St. Alban remains a symbol of the fact. St. Aldate is a recognised Saint of the British Church. The Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire 100 years before the withdrawal of the Legions from Britain. Even so, it was not then a Christian country. Very few Christian symbols have been found among the excavations of Romano-British buildings. However, the British Church was strong enough to survive and to flourish among the Welsh and the people of Cornwall, when all the Roman institutions disappeared.

By permission of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society.

THE NOKE ROMAN VILLA, HUCCLECOTE, FROM THE SOUTH.

The Roman Villa.

Even in those distant days of the Roman occupation we may be sure that our Hill and the immediate district would be considered an attractive and convenient spot. We can imagine that a Roman, perhaps one of the "equites" who had served in the wars, was offered a grant of land. He selected the South side of the Hill for his Villa or Farm House, in the large Noke field (nearly opposite Noke Court on the Churchdown and Hucclecote Lane). He built it on the site of an old British homestead. It was a sheltered position and faced South. The great Roman road, Irmin Street, which ran straight from Cirencester to Gloucester was close at hand. Even to-day there are traces of minor roads or tracks quite near; part of the Churchdown and Hucclecote Lane is still marked Green Street on maps and it probably ran through Brockworth and joined Irmin Street; a branch road would connect-up with the old Greenway, which ran over the Cotswolds, through Saltly Grange, to the fine Villa estates at Withington and Chedworth. There was evidently a track from the Noke Villa over Chosen Hill, which probably joined Pirton Lane. Several minor roads or tracks passed through Churchdown; they joined or crossed the Gloucester and Cheltenham road, which is evidently an old minor Roman road; so there would be easy access to Gloucester from the North as well as from the South West.

The remains of the Roman Villa were excavated during the autumn and winter of 1932, under the supervision of Mrs. E. M. Clifford, F.S.A. Scot. The site belonged to the late Mr. C. de Lisle Wells of the Noke, Hucclecote, on whose invitation the excavation was made. The excavations have again been covered up, as the land was required for agricultural purposes. However, Mrs. Clifford has published a detailed description of the Villa and, with it, photographic illustrations and carefully drawn plans of the house and outbuildings.

This Villa was not so large as most of the other Villas in Gloucestershire, but it seems to answer the description of Romano-British farms "Self-supporting economic units." Other industries as well as farming may have been carried on. The house was arranged for comfortable living—even luxury. It was well heated; there were hot and cold baths, good rooms, and ample sleeping accommodation, with outbuildings and rooms for the staff.

Evidently the Roman owner was a man of substance. He would often pay visits to Gloucester for business and social purposes. He would probably take a holiday at Bath, which in Roman times was a health resort—a Spa famous for its salubrious hot springs. (A fragment of an inscribed stone found at Bath records the death of a Decurion of the Colonia of Gloucester aged 86 years.) Travelling in horse-drawn cars or chariots on the good Roman roads was comfortable and fairly rapid—even 100 miles per day has been suggested.

From the bone-remains found at the Noke we may conclude that mixed farming was carried on. Remains of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs, and cats were numerous. Of wild life, the red deer, hare, rabbit, fox and badger—the last is interesting, he is still here, may he long survive on the hill. Corn would certainly have been grown, especially wheat. I have heard old folks say that Churchdown used to grow some of the best wheat in the country. Corn growing evidently has a long record here. In the 3rd century it is recorded that corn was sent from Gloucestershire to the Cologne area, in a time of famine. There were orchards round the hill; the place names suggest this: Pirton and Parton mean the Pear tree Tūn. Apples were very much prized in Rome; seven varieties were favoured, and, as they were brought from various parts of the Empire, some perhaps were grown at Churchdown.

I remember standing at the Noke Villa, one afternoon, when the work of excavation was going on. I looked towards the mounds on the South side of Chosen Hill; the sun was bright, there were no leaves on the trees, and the lines and curves of the hillside stood out clearly. It seemed to me evident that once it was terraced, as we see in some parts of Switzerland to-day, for fruit-growing.

Many are inclined to think there were never vineyards in this country, but there is reference to Churchdown's vineyard even in Norman times. Grapes are said to have been taken to Malmesbury for wine-making. So it is quite likely that a vineyard was planted on the hillside by the Roman farmer of the Noke estate.

The pieces of Roman bricks and pottery found in and near Chapel Haye, and at Parton Court seem to suggest that farm homesteads stood there and were part of the Noke estate.

There seems to be evidence to show that this was a fairly well developed agricultural district.

The withdrawal of the Roman legions, in the early 5th century, was followed by the departure of the Roman settlers; they no doubt left this distant part of the Empire as danger threatened in the central provinces. The days of expanding Empire were over.

The departure of the Romans did not cause an immediate social upheaval. The Britons had learnt the Roman civilization, and carried on in the same way. The Noke Villa farm was occupied, perhaps by a Briton, for at least another 100 years. A sort of self-government was set up. Kings were elected in Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath. But for 400 years they had relied on the Roman military forces to protect their country from foreign foes; they were a peace-loving people and had not learnt the arts of war. 150 years later they fell an easy prey to the Anglo-Saxon invaders. These Anglo-Saxons, after conquering the South (Wessex) moved on to take the Severn Vale. The three Kings, of Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath, combined to oppose them, but their armies were untrained and inefficiently led. They met in battle at Deorham (Dyrham), near Bath, in A.D. 577. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says "Cuthwine and Ceawlin fought against the Britons and slew three kings, Commail and Condidan and Fairinmail, at a place which is called Deorham, and took three cities from them, Gloucester and Cirencester and Bath." It was a great slaughter. Gloucestershire was then open to the invaders—our English forefathers. The land was ruthlessly devastated. Cirencester and Bath were levelled to the ground, and Gloucester nearly so. The Britons who escaped massacre fled to Wales and Cornwall. These Norse-men came to make this land their home. Their wives and their goods and chattels soon followed them. They had no use for towns and Roman houses, so they sacked and destroyed them.

In other countries, like Spain or Gaul and Italy, although equally conquered by the Northmen, religion, social life, administrative order remained Roman. "In Britain alone Rome died into a vague tradition of the past. The Villas, the Mosaics which we dig up are no relics of our English fathers, but of a Roman world which our fathers' sword swept utterly away. Its law, its literature, its manners, its faith went with it. The new England was a heathen country. The religion of Woden and Thunder triumphed over the religion of Christ."

CHAPTER III.

THE ANGLO-SAXON AGE.

With the coming of the English the story of our Nation begins. They are our forefathers. This fair land appealed to them as the spot on earth that they would make their home; and we their descendants to-day love our country as those forefathers did. It was they who gave our land the proud name of England. They did not come as a united nation, but as tribal bands of the same race, and speaking much the same language. They were rival tribes and constantly were fighting against each other. These English fore-bears of ours were of a strong hardy race, self-reliant and "Free Men." Such men could not be mere destroyers; the warrior settled down as a farmer. Little village groups lived together, often near the site of a Roman Villa they had burnt. They lived the same sort of life they had lived in their old Norse homes. They set up their old social life here, and we can trace how it developed. Little groups of settlers chose an Eolderman, and soon, as the need of stronger leadership arose, they elected a king.

The early story is a tale of fierce fighting between rival English tribes.

After the defeat of the Britons in the battle of Dyrham (near Bath) 577 A.D. the West Saxons, called Hwiccians, took possession of and settled in Gloucestershire and the Severn district. In course of time they were known as Mercians, because the country was called Mercia (marsh land), the border land between the English and the Britons or Welsh.

Charles Kingley extolled the natural qualities of the English, but he said "They never throve until they became Christian."

Christianity came to Gloucestershire later than to some of the other parts of England. The coming of St. Augustine to Kent, the Church at Canterbury, and the great missionary work carried on under the guidance of Paulinus which extended right up into Northumbria, are well known. It looked as though England would soon become a Christian country. That missionary effort did not touch Gloucestershire.

Penda, the strong heathen king of Mercia, made a great fight to maintain the old pagan gods: "Woden and Thor" were his battle cry. He defeated and slew the Northumbrian Christian king Edwin. The power of Northumbria was broken, but it did not acknowledge the supremacy of Penda. Paulinus and his Missionaries fled back to Kent, and did not return; Christianity languished.

St. Oswald.

OSWALD, the son of Edwin, was heir to the Northumbrian throne; his name is still honoured in Churchdown. He was then only a lad and was urged to fly to Iona. He spent some time, in hiding, in the monastery of St. Columba. There he was fired with the missionary spirit. He was soon recalled to Northumbria, and was proclaimed king. Aidan, his teacher at the Monastery, quickly followed him. How he and Aidan worked together for the spread of the Christian faith is one of the most touching and thrilling stories of the Church. The king himself is remembered as the Saint King Oswald, and St. Aidan as the Apostle of the North.

With the Cross as his standard he raised an army. He defeated the pagan forces at "Heavens Field" 633 A.D. For some nine years Northumbria flourished under Oswald's rule. But Penda was still powerful, and he defeated Oswald at the battle of Maserfield, near Oswestry, 642. Oswald was killed, and by Penda's orders, his body was mutilated; his head and his hands were set on stakes on the battle field.

As the shrine of the Saint King, at a later date, in the Priory of St. Oswald, Gloucester, became a strong connecting link between Gloucester and the Northern Province, it may be of more than sentimental interest to tell of the wanderings of the poor broken body of the king. The fragments of the body were gathered together and were taken to three separate places. His head was buried at Lindisfarne. His hands were preserved at Bamborough. The rest of his bones went to a monastery at Bardney in Lincolnshire; when Bardney was ravaged by Danes, Ethelred and Aethelflaed rescued the bones, and brought them to Gloucester and enshrined them in the new Priory they were founding in 909. There they rested till Thomas, Archbishop of York (1070-1100), removed them to York. He said York was the only fitting resting place for the bones of the great northern Saint. At Lindisfarne the head was eventually placed in the coffin of St. Cuthbert and was removed to Durham and buried behind the high Altar of the Cathedral. There the skull of St. Oswald still rests.

Penda was then supreme in England. Almost alone Northumbria refused to yield to him. Oswiu, perhaps Oswald's uncle, was appointed king. He re-organized his kingdom. In 655 he fought Penda and his pagan host at Winwoed, near Leeds, and utterly defeated them. Penda did not survive the defeat. This victory ended the long struggle between heathenism and Christianity in England.

Mercia became subject to Northumbria. Three years later Wulfere, Penda's son, after his conversion to Christianity, was appointed king of Mercia, but he still

owned the overlordship of the king of Northumbria. Oswiu appointed his grandson Osric viceroy.

Osric, Viceroy of Mercia, 676-718. As it was largely through the influence and zeal of this Northumbrian Prince that the dwellers in the Severn and Avon country owe their Christianity, we should note a little about him. He was born in 655. His early years were spent at the royal household of king Oswiu. He would have been in close touch with those zealous Christian champions of the North—those who carried on the work of St. Oswald and St. Aidan.

He was a contemporary of the saintly Bede, "the tireless pioneer of that bright scholar-band who have done so much to educate our England." Of Osric, wrote Bede, "he remained a long while, preaching the word of faith, and at the same time making himself an example of life both to them who saw, and to those who heard him." He would have been familiar with Whitby Abbey, the famous missionary centre, for St. Hilda, the Abbess, was his kinswoman.

It should be noted that after the Conference of Whitby, 664, the Celtic Church of Northumbria was united to the Church of Canterbury. From that time the missionaries from Northumbria to Gloucestershire represented the whole Church of England, and acknowledged the Archbishop of Canterbury as Primate.

Osric has left his mark on Gloucestershire. He made Gloucester his headquarters. He it was who founded the Abbey of St. Peter, now the Cathedral, in 681, to be a missionary centre like Whitby Abbey. Worcester Cathedral claims him to be its founder; this perhaps means that Osric founded a religious house there, which would become the Cathedral when Archbishop Theodor of Canterbury, no doubt with the support and approval of Osric and Wulfere, created the Diocese of Worcester in 680. He also founded the Abbey at Bath, and set up a network of missionary centres. Pershore Abbey was the foundation of his brother.

Osric loved Gloucestershire, and when called to be king of Northumbria in 718, he requested to be buried in his Abbey at Gloucester. He died in 729. His body was brought to Gloucester, and his remains still rest beneath that fine tomb on the North side of the high Altar.

Abbot Froucester, in his history compiled at the end of the 14th century, stated that "Osric, the king of Northumbria, who died the 9th of May A.D. 729, was buried near his sister Kyneburgh, before the Altar of St. Petronilla in the north part of the monastery of Gloucester. There was the inscription

OSRICUS REX PRIMUS FOUNDATOR HUJUS MONASTERII 681."

Abbot Malvern, the last Abbot of Gloucester, 1515 to 1539, erected a graceful monument of perpendicular work in which the leaden coffin was placed. The effigy of the king is probably older. It now occupies the place of honour usually reserved for the founder.

After the careful exploration of the tomb by the late Dean Spence-Jones, 1892, it is evident that the actual remains of Osric lie there to-day. It is more than a memorial erected at a later date.

It is well to note carefully the influence and work of Osric in Gloucestershire. It was the beginning of that sentimental tie that for so many centuries connected the county, and especially Churchdown, with the Northern Eccl: Province.

In the Early Anglo-Saxon period there is little to record about Churchdown.

It has been noted in the foregoing that there is evidence of the early occupation of a large area surrounding the Hill, even in Roman times.

From the Domesday Survey we learn that Circesdune was taxed at 15 hides (a hide was about 160 acres more or less according to the quality of the land). In Edward the Confessor's reign a yearly rent of £13 was paid, and £12 in the reign of William I.

There was a wood ½-mile long and 3 furlongs wide. This, we may suppose, was on the land of the properties now known as Woodlands, Woodhouse, Woodfield.

Christianity spread rapidly throughout Gloucestershire after the days of Osric and Wulfere, the sub-king of Mercia.

This district was comparatively free from war and strife for a hundred years or so until the coming of the Danes. Those people living in and around Churchdown were, no doubt, happy and contented. There would have been some homesteads like Elmbridge, perhaps Pirton and Parton, and a few others.

The Invasions of the Danes.

About the middle of the 9th century the Danes invaded the greater part of England. It was feared that Christianity might fall before these pagan hosts. Troublous times again came to this Severn land.

The story of Alfred the Great has been handed down to us. He is still remembered as one of England's deliverers, and a very famous man. During his reign he drove out the Danes, or reduced their sphere to a comparatively small area. He did much to unite England and to make his people strong enough to repel their foes. He kept an organized military force, and created a fleet. We remember, too, his work in uplifting the social life of his people. He wished to leave behind the memory, not simply of conquest, but of good works—good government and the education of his people.

His two children, his son Edward who succeeded him, and his daughter Ethelflaed, he specially trained. They became the ablest rulers of their time.

What especially concerns our story is that Alfred added Mercia to his kingdom of Wessex. Mercia was then not the great territory, held by Penda and Wulfere which included all central England; the Northern and Eastern portions were still occupied by the Danes, and were known as "The Five Boroughs."

Alfred appointed Ethelred Eolderman (his son-in-law) and his wife Ethelflaed as viceroys of Mercia. They resided at Gloucester. After Alfred's death in 901 they continued to rule in Mercia under his son king Edward.

There were soon fresh Danish invasions. In one of these they took Gloucester. It is thought that the invading force was defeated at Churchdown, at a place called Cantbrig.

The Danes had reached Tewkesbury, but being hard pressed were retreating to their ships at Gloucester. Ethelred attacked and defeated them in "Woden's Field" while crossing a bridge called "Cantbrig." The late Canon Bazeley considered that Woden's Field was land between Chosen Hill and Robinswood Hill, and that Cantbrig could be identified with Ellbrig (this means a plank or timber bridge), now known as Elmbridge.

Wherever the victory was gained, it affected Churchdown closely. As a thank-offering for their victory, Ethelred and Ethelflaed founded the Priory of St. Oswald in Gloucester. They richly endowed it. Some of the endowment consisted of land and dues (perhaps tithe) in Churchdown.

AETHELFLAED.

Ethelred died in 912. He was buried in the new Priory.

Ethelflaed continued to rule alone in Mercia for another nine years. She was a very able ruler, and a great military leader. Her exploits were brilliant, almost surpassing those of her father. She abandoned the old strategy of war and raid for that of siege and fortress building. She built a line of fortresses to guard her Northern boundary. It was while superintending the building of a fortress at Tamworth that she died in 921. She was buried in the Priory. She was more than a military leader. She had the welfare of her people at heart. The beautiful title that was given her "The Lady of the Mercians" tells of the affection and honour in which she was held by her people.

It seems reasonable to suppose that it was under her beneficent rule that Churchdown became a place of some importance. She, it is thought, made Churchdown and a large part of the surrounding district a Royal Barony, and perhaps even at that time made it an ecclesiastiscal estate, to be held by royal licence.

We can understand how Ethelflaed, who was a devoted church-woman, would in the interest of her tenants provide a church for them in Churchdown. The name Chapel Haye, and the tradition that a Saxon Church once stood there, indicate the site.

As so much of our story centres round Chapel Haye, it may be well to consider it next.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPEL HAYE.

Chapel Haye is situated on the higher end of a belt of sand, of irregular width and depth, which extends in a gradual decline for a quarter of a mile or so almost due North. (There are similar veins of sand in several parts of the district, deposited on the top of the heavy clay which is general. Agriculturalists and householders much appreciate these patches of sand.)

Chapel Haye is well elevated, some 260 feet above sea level. It commands fine views, and it is dry ground.

It was about the centre of the village, when the "Hamlet of Hucclecote" was included.

Three roads converge around it—Pirton Lane (which leads to Gloucester); The Badgeworth Road (which joins Pirton Lane at the Vicarage corner); The Hucclecote Road (into which runs the branch road to Brockworth). These roads form the boundaries on the N.W. and S. sides. The old boundary on the East side is not so clear. It looks as though the sand mound of Chapel Haye once sloped sharply down to the road below, which runs by Draggots Court and Drews Court, and leads into the Hucclecote road above; that road also may be an old one, for those houses mark at least the sites of old homesteads. The sand on that sharp decline was either washed away or was removed for building purposes. The retaining wall then became a necessity. The road below was probably the E. boundary in old days.

Its natural formation and its advantageous position mark Chapel Haye as a "Chosen Spot," even in distant days!

The "finds" of Roman pottery, bricks, and a coin of the date of the Emperor Constantine take us back to the days when a Roman Colonist lived at his Villa at the Noke. The Kiln recently found at considerable depth beneath the soil, may be a relic of his industrial enterprises on the site.

It was in Saxon times that Churchdown began to be a place of importance.

A well-founded tradition tells of a "Church Below." The name Chapel Haye confirms this, and definitely locates the site for us. The date of that first little Church we can

with some confidence assume to be in the early part of the 10th century. At that time Ethelflaed (daughter of Alfred the Great) and her husband, Ethelred the Eolderman, ruled Mercia as joint Viceroys. They owned the Barony of Churchdown—perhaps they created it. When they founded the Priory of St. Oswald in Gloucester, 909, they endowed it with land and "dues" at Churchdown, and placed the spiritual oversight of the Barony in charge of the Priory. It seems natural to suppose that the Chapel was built about that time. Around it a graveyard would be arranged and evidence of this is clear.

As the large Barony increased in importance Churchdown became the business centre, and Chapel Haye the meeting place. (As stated later, the Archbishops of York held the Barony for about 500 years till 1539.) Substantial buildings would be required at Chapel Haye. Certainly a Church House where business, church and secular, could be transacted; there the Bailiwick would hold his "courts," he was an important man. Other buildings, such as Lodgings, for the Baron or his representative when on their regular visits; also for the officials of the Barony and Priory. In 1293 Archbishop Romeyn spent Christmas at Churchdown and probably lodged at Chapel Haye.

Here would be held the Annual Fair and Revels. If the field did not provide sufficient space the land around Barnhay would be available. The name Barnhay may denote the site of the old Tithe Barn. On the other side of the field is Drews Court, still sometimes called "The Tithe House."

Almost all traces of the old Chapel Haye have gone; or they are hidden beneath the soil. Its fame and the important work that was done there are forgotten!

The Dissolution of the Priory of St. Oswald meant the demolition of the Church and Baronial buildings.

There is no record of the sale of Chapel Haye land, either as the property of the Priory, or as part of the temporal estate of the Archbishop of York.

It seems likely that it was considered to be Common Land at that time. In support of this view it may be noted that there are two, if not three, rights of way across the field; the Village Pound (in which stray animals were placed) and the Stocks (for human offenders) remained

there—much later they were removed to the Green. The Fish pond was preserved, perhaps as a Ducking Pond.

At a much later date the field would have been enclosed as a pasture land. It then passed into private ownership.

For years Chapel Haye remained as a fine pasture field. Some may remember the verdant green spot, even in dry seasons when other grass land was parched.

In 1859 the Vicarage was built on part of Chapel Haye. It occupies all the South end of the field—about 3 acres.

In 1904 the Church of St. Andrew was built on the N.W. corner. The Churchdown Land Company, the owners of the land, gave the site. The spot was selected as the most central and suitable position for a Church. It was not generally known then that the first Village Church stood in Chapel Haye. However it was a step towards the restoration of Chapel Haye to its old position as the centre of Church and Village life. Probably the site of the Methodist Chapel, built about the same time, was once part of Chapel Haye. In 1919 four bungalows were erected there. These are certainly not in keeping with the old traditions.

In 1920 the ex-service men acquired a portion of it and erected "The Churchdown and District United Service Club." That is an excellent and well organised Club, which is and should continue to be a centre of Village social life.

The remaining portion of the field is now the Children's Playing Field, acquired in 1925. Unfortunately, it is rather a small piece of ground not quite 3 acres. Certainly small for the purpose.

We need to remember that Chapel Haye has a great tradition behind it. It is worth while, not only for sentimental, but also for practical reasons, to make a great effort to restore it and to keep it as the Religious and Social Centre of the Parish.

Much of the unknown story of Chapel Haye, no doubt, could be found beneath the soil. Where partial excavations have been made for building purposes, there have been interesting "finds."

In the Vicarage garden foundations of buildings were found. These have been removed.

On the site of St. Andrew's Church no trace of buildings nor of relics were found.

Around the bungalows the foundations of substantial walls were found. These extended towards the Church, and were of interest. The Churchdown Land Company gave a small piece of ground containing a portion of these walls to the Church "to be preserved and kept uncovered."

In 1920, on the site of the Club house, a few human remains were uncovered, and a Roman coin of Constantine I. was found.

In 1924 extra land for tennis courts and bowling greens was acquired. A good deal of levelling had to be done. It was clear that the old burial ground was being disturbed.

Dr. R. W. Murray, who watched the work throughout, has compiled a careful report. (Published in the *Transactions* of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society. Vol. xlv.)

These points may be of general interest.

Human remains.

Most of the skeletons found were arranged in order, the bodies were lying E. and W. from 4ft. to 5ft. deep. The skeleton were of adults, men and women, fragments only of the bones of young people and children were found around. The length of the skeletons varied from 5ft. 10ins. to 5f. 4ins. He says that in many cases the joint ends of the bones of the knee and hip showed clear evidence of rheumatic arthritis! At one spot it appeared there had been a collective burial—there were two or three tiers of skeletons 6 inches to one foot of soil separating each overlying layer. These we may presume, perhaps, were the victims of the Plague which ravaged England in the years 1346 and 1347. These skeletons were of Saxon type, in Sir Arthur Keith's opinion, date about 13th century. All the human remains that were disturbed were carefully interred again near their first resting-place.

The Kiln.

The base of a Kiln, about 7½ft. from the surface level was found. It was below some human remains, so evidently it was of earlier date than the burials. The portions of the

wall remaining were 2ft. to 1½ft., forming a rough circle of 6ft. The purpose of the Kiln is not established; the amount of iron stone dross found near seems to signify that it might have been used for smelting iron. It is situated outside the Club boundary and is now covered with sandy soil, but its position has been carefully noted in case an opportunity occurs for further investigation.

A considerable quantity of stone had to be removed during the levelling operations. These were unworked stones, which had evidently been collected from elsewhere in the field to fill in holes in the uneven ground when enclosed for pasture.

The soil in only a small portion of the field has been moved. Even that amount of excavation seems to show that further search would locate the exact position of the Chapel and other buildings that once stood on Chapel Haye, and would reveal much of its story in bygone days.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROYAL BARONY OF CHURCHDOWN AND THE PRIORY OF ST. OSWALD, GLOUCESTER.

It is not strictly correct to speak of "the barony of Churchdown" in pre-Norman times. Barony however is a convenient word and is generally understood to-day. The Demesne lands, Manors, and Vills, which comprised the barony, are referred to in official registers as the Barony of Churchdown in 13th century.

I once heard it definitely stated by a well known archaeologist that Aethelflaed created the barony of Churchdown, sometimes called "The 12 Vills of Gloucestershire," and issued a charter dealing with the barony, and that it is preserved somewhere. If it could be found it would doubtless explain much for us. (Nothing is known of it in at the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the Bodlean Library, and the Archbishop's Registry, York.)

It seems clear that the spiritual care of the barony, with all its Churches and Chapelries, was placed under the Priory of St. Oswald, Gloucester (founded in 909 by Aethelflaed), and that the "temporalities" of the barony were vested in the bishop who, at the time, had jurisdiction over the Priory.

The Priory was clearly intended to be a connecting link between Gloucestershire and the Northern Province, and to preserve the old sentimental tie between the two—commenced two centuries earlier. This link was further strengthened when the saintly Bishop Oswald of Worcester was allowed to hold the Archbishopric of York and the See of Worcester together, "in order that Worcester should not lose his pastoral care." Oswald's two successors held York and Worcester together.

It seems very possible that during this period the Barony and St. Oswald's Priory were attached to York, and were held as a "peculiar" in Gloucestershire by royal licence.

When the two Sees were separated again in 1023 perhaps the Archbishop of Canterbury claimed them as a "peculiar" in his Southern Province, and obtained them by royal licence.

Certain it is that Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury at the time of his deposition by William the Conqueror held them.

When Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, was appointed Archbishop of York in 1060, he was unwilling to give up the Worcester diocese. He procured the sanction of the Pope to hold the two Sees. He was a man of influence and of a dominant character. Although he was apparently in favour with William the Conqueror—he crowned him King on Christmas Day, 1066—yet William ignored the pope's decree. He refused to allow Aldred to hold the two Sees. He also refused his claim to the Churchdown barony, which, he said, was a royal barony, and so it was his prerogative to appoint.

The Archbishops of York continued to press their claims. Aldred's successor put it forward but without success. Some 20 years later Thomas of York appealed to that shrewd but unscrupulous king William Rufus. He allowed the claim, but compelled the Archbishops to give up certain of their lands in Lincolnshire in exchange. This was done. So from that time, 1097, the Royal Barony of Churchdown was legally vested in the Archbishops of York, and the Priory of St. Oswald, with its Churches and Chapelries, passed into their jurisdiction.

This continued for nearly 500 years, *i.e.* until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The fact that the Barony was an Ecclesiastical Estate at the time probably saved the Churchdown district from some of the hardships and oppression that followed the Norman Conquest. The Conqueror had brought with him a host of Norman nobles and retainers who helped him to conquer England. They all looked for a reward. Throughout the country the Saxon owners were deprived of their lands, and the ruthless Normans were given possession. The Norman kings, speaking generally, did not deprive the Church of her possessions. The kings freely took Church funds for their own use, but did not give her lands to their Norman retainers. The Norman nobles quickly erected strong fortified castles on their newly acquired estates. They lived in luxury themselves, but oppressed those living around. In this barony there were no castles, because it was an ecclesiastical estate. Life, however, was not quite safe and peaceful. As a protection against robber bands that roamed the country, farmers made moats round their homesteads. Moated houses were not known before the Conquest. In Churchdown there were four moated houses certainly—Elmbridge, Pirton Court, Parton Court, Brick-

hampton. As these are old homesteads the moats were probably made in the 12th century. A further reference to these Court Houses will be made later on.

It is not possible to state accurately the area included in the Barony of Churchdown, nor to give the names of all the churches and chapelries dependent on the Priory of St. Oswald. Sometimes there is a reference to the 12 Vills, which comprised the barony, but they are not all mentioned by name. It is definitely stated that the following were temporal estates of the barony:—

(1) Churchdown, with its members, namely, Elbrig (Elmbridge), Brickhampton, Parton, Pireton (Pirton), Hoke (Noke), Hoclicote (Hucclecote), Wodhoclicote (Wood Hucclecote).
(2) Swindon.
(3) Compton Abdale.
(4) North Cerney.
(5) Oddington and Condicote.
(6) Norton Episcopi, and Sandhurst; Norton Prioris, Walesworth (Wallsworth), Ablode.

To these, Surdington (Shurdington), Lassington, and Longford, it seems should be added.

We know little of the internal history of the Barony, or of the spiritual jurisdiction, but of the formal administration our records are fairly plentiful.

Churchdown was evidently the business centre, and gave its name to the Barony. The Archbishops appointed a bailiff of Churchdown, and his bailiwick extended over the whole barony. He would have been an important man. He appears to have held his courts at Churchdown. It is possible that "Norman's Brook" gets its name from one "Norman," a bailiff of Churchdown who lived at a house at Longford.

The Calendar of Charter Rolls shows, not only the interest that some Archbishops of York took in their barony, but also tells something of the agricultural system of those days.

1283. 6 October.

"Confirmation of an ordinance Whereby William de Wickwain, Archiep: of York——ordained that five hundred and two oxen, by the greater hundred, and fifty horses needed for agriculture in the demesne lands of the Arch-

bishopric, with oxen and horses with a thousand sheep, to wit five hundred withers and five hundred ewes, the said Archbishop has given and bequeathed to his successors in the See. Should always be maintained, whether the See be vacant or full, in addition to the thousand sheep above mentioned. Upon the manner of the Archbishop in the manner hereafter determined, that is, in the bailiwick of Chirchedon, at Chirchedon two carthorses with cart and thirty six oxen with four ploughs and their gear."

Norton, Shurdington, Cerney, Cumpton, Otington, Suwell, Skeriburn, Wylton, Beverley, Ripon, Hextildorham, and Partington, are all mentioned in a similar manner.

"All the aforesaid stock on the decease of the said Archbishop shall pass to the King, who shall have use of it during the vacancy of the See, and shall restore them in the same number to the next person succeeding to the See who shall in turn have the use of them and on his death or resignation shall deliver them in the same number to the King; and so forth, any losses for whatever cause to be made good by the person responsible; and the keepers of the See during vacancy shall make their corporal oath to observe this ordinance, and each Archbishop on receiving the temporalities and at his enthronement shall solemnly promise to observe the same."

This seems to show that stock and certain farming utensils were attached to the farms in those far off days. The tenant would have the use of them, but had to account for the number of stock he had received and to keep farming utensils in repair. Much the same system is followed, I think, in some of the Mountain Farms in Wales to-day.

A Fair was held here in those early days, and no doubt was continued for centuries. Archbishop Walter de Gray in 1252 obtained a charter from Henry III. to hold a fair. The Calendar of Charter Rolls, April 27th, 1252, records: "Grant to Walter Archiep: of York and his successors a yearly fair at his manor of Chirchedon, on the vigil, feast, and morrow of St. Bartholomew Apostle." This was probably to legalise the fair that had been held in previous years.

It seems natural to suppose that the Fair would be held in and around Chapel Haye, which then included a much larger area. (See fuller note on Chapel Haye.) No doubt there would have been a Stock Sale of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, etc. There would also have been a gay scene provided

by jugglers, tumblers, dancers, herbalists selling love potions, and other itinerant quacks, parties of minstrels, and, not the least important, a goodly supply of refreshments—pasties, beer, cider.

At the Church there would be Festive Service to mark the days; these always formed an integral part of Village Fairs. There may have been Sports on the hill—races, archery, etc.

(In connection with the Fair at Chipping Campden, there were sports and revelries on Dover Hill. These were continued till recent times, discontinued in 1852.)

Although the journey from York was long and travelling was difficult, the York Registers record visits from the Archbishops to Churchdown at various times. They probably travelled from York to Lincoln, *via* Todcaster, Castleford, and Doncaster, then by the Fosse Way to Cirencester, and so to Gloucester. As they had numerous retainers the journey would take ten or twelve days, depending on the weather and the number of stoppages. Sometimes they came from London.

The York Registers record visits in the 13th and 14th centuries, but no details of the visits are given.

Archbishop Walter de Gray came 8 or 10 times between 1224 and 1254. Archbishop Romeyn came from London to Churchdown in 1289. In 1290 he spent two days there, May 28th and 29th. In 1293 he spent Christmas at Churchdown.

Later Archbishops appear to have left the visitations of Gloucestershire in the hands of their Suffragans.

The Priory of St. Oswald, Gloucester.

The Priory was founded by Ethelred Eolderman and his wife Ethelflaed, the joint viceroys of Mercia, in 909.

As previously stated, it was their thank-offering for their victory over the Danes at Cantbrig. It was also a memorial of Oswiu's (the Northumbrian king) victory over Penda (the heathen king of Mercia) at Winwoed 655; that victory ended the long struggle between heathenism and Christianity in England.

They dedicated it to St. Oswald, the noble and revered King of Northumbria, who fell in battle at Maserfield in 642. They rescued his bones from Bardney, where they had lain for 200 years, after that monastery was ravaged by

Danes, and they enshrined them in their new Priory. No doubt they thought it was fitting that they, then the rulers of Mercia, should pay honour to St. Oswald whose body Penda, the Mercian king, had ruthlessly mutilated on the battlefield nearly two centuries before.

The Priory and the Shrine became a strong link connecting Gloucestershire and the Northern Province. It preserved the old sentimental tie between them since the days of Osric.

The Priory was built on land given by them lying outside the old City wall, and along the bank of the Severn. The river then ran through what is now called St. Catherine's Meadow from Kingsholme, past the site of the Priory down what is now called Priory Road, under a bridge of seven arches, which still lies beneath Westgate Street and was known as "Foreign Bridge," and into the present bed of the river at the Quay. The disused "Old St. Catharine's Church" marks approximately the site.

They richly endowed the Priory. It owned land and dues, perhaps tithe, in Churchdown proper and in other parts of the Barony. It had the spiritual oversight of all the churches and chapelries in the Churchdown Barony. It had certain properties and important Ecclesiastical rights and privileges in the City. It was also responsible for a suburban district around Kingsholme. The ruined arches that are preserved on the site are said to be the remains of St. Catharine's Chapel, which was attached to the Priory. In it stood the Altar of the suburban district.

A Prior and about a dozen Canons were attached to the Priory.

(For the full story of the Priory, see "The Jurisdiction of the Archbishops of York," by Prof. Hamilton Thompson. And the "Priory of St. Oswald," by H. Medland.)

At one time it was a spacious building. It was twice rebuilt. The 650 years' history of the Priory is rather a chequered one.

"The first century or so of the existence of the Priory was an era of comparative prosperity. The next period is marked by a series of conflicts in which it maintained its independence against diocesans and metropolitans, but was left weakened in material sources."

"Its appropriation to the Archbishops of York condemned it throughout its history to isolation from its natural surroundings, and to a somewhat insignificant place among the religious foundations of Gloucester."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISSOLUTION OF ST. OSWALD'S PRIORY AND THE DISMEMBERMENT OF THE BARONY OF CHURCHDOWN.

The authority of the Pope in England was abolished by an Act passed in 1535. Previously the Convocations of Canterbury and York had declared that "The Bishop of Rome has no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God in the Kingdom of England than any other foreign Bishop."

The Monastic system was then an integral of the Church of England. The wealth and influence of the Monasteries was enormous, and for the most part would be used to support the Supremacy of the Pope.

Those in power decided that the Monasteries must be abolished. The King and his Ministers determined to destroy the network of Monasteries throughout the country, and very thoroughly they did their work.

The King, Henry VIII., and his energetic and generally unscrupulous agent, Thomas Cromwell, are often spoken of as ruthless robbers. Much can be said, and has been said, about those distressful days. Abuse, and praise to some extent, is showered upon Henry VIII. and his ministers; whether it is entirely deserved cannot now be considered. Their purpose was to put an end to the Monastic system, and to make a restoration of the Papal Supremacy in the future impossible. To do this really effectively they saw only one way. The Monastic Houses, beautiful though they were, must be destroyed, and their rich endowments must be taken from them.

Very quickly a complete inventory of the Monasteries was taken. The destruction of the buildings soon followed. It was not their intention to destroy the Church of England. The Cathedrals were spared, and some of the Abbeys, *e.g.* St. Peter's, Gloucester, and St. Augustine's, Bristol, were preserved to become Cathedrals. Parts of some Abbeys, *e.g.* Tewkesbury and Evesham, were spared in order to become Parish Churches. The Abbots and the clerical staff of the Monasteries, in most cases, were given benefices in the Church. The Abbot of Tewkesbury was appointed the first Bishop of Gloucester. The Prior of St. Oswald's became the first Dean of Gloucester. Others received life pensions, and some appear to have been liberal.

Weakened of course the Church was by these drastic measures, but thankful we may be that the Church of England has survived as the Catholic Church of the country, and free from the usurped supremacy of the Pope of Rome. We need to remember the purpose that prompted the suppression and destruction of the Monasteries, although we may think the misappropriation of the property and treasures as little better than wholesale robbery!

The dissolution of the Priory of St. Oswald's, and the dismemberment of the Barony, which followed soon after, greatly affected Churchdown.

The Priory was one of the smaller and poorer monasteries, and so was forced to surrender a little earlier than the larger ones.

In the survey made in 1535 the income was stated to be below the stipulated £200 per annum. The report returned the yearly value at £94, and the debts amounted to £124 9s. The House had been repaired, but the Church was dilapidated.

The report was favourable to the Prior and to the seven Canons. Prior Gylford appears in the pension list of 1537-8 with an allowance of £15. He was appointed the first Dean of the Cathedral in 1541.

That the Prior of St. Oswald was the first Dean of Gloucester in 1541 seems clear. In the list of the Deans of Gloucester the first name is William Jennings. The name "Sir William Jennings" as the surveyor of Churchdown is recorded. Perhaps there has been a confusion of the names of the surveyor and prior. Prof. Hamilton-Thompson takes that view. Mr. Medland thought that Jennings was an alternative name for Gylford.

Five of the seven Canons wished to remain in religion, and were probably given benefices as secular priests. Perhaps one was appointed Curate of Churchdown.

There are a few records of the disposal of the property, etc., in Churchdown and in the City.

John Jennings, of the King's household, obtained a lease of the Manor of Parton; he also seems to have obtained Pirton Manor. The same John Jennings received a grant in fee for £100 of the Priory and Churchyard with all the property formerly belonging to the Priory in the parish of St. Oswald, and in the parishes of St. John the Baptist, St. Michael, St. Aldate, St. Ewen, St. Mary's of All Saints, St. Mary de Grace, Holy Trinity, and St. Nicholas.

Many of the Priory buildings were not removed from the site until the Siege of Gloucester in 1643.

The new Diocese of Gloucester, founded in 1541, included the whole County of Gloucester. There was no question raised about York retaining any jurisdiction in Gloucestershire.

The temporalities of the Archbishops, *i.e.* the Barony of Churchdown, were not immediately affected. However in 1544-5 Archbishop Holgate made an exchange of his Gloucestershire property with the Crown for other properties, mainly consisting of advowsons of Churches in the North which had been previously appropriated to the Monasteries.

Among the properties at that time sold by the Crown appear The Barony of Churchdown, with the Lordships and Manors of Churchdown, Hucclecote, Norton, Shurdington, Witcombe, North Cerney, Compton Abdale, and Oddington.

So ended the long connection between the Churchdown Barony and the See of York.

One more feature about St. Oswald's Priory is perhaps worth while noting. "The parish of St. Oswald was a suburban district outside the City to the North and North-West, which was probably the 'liberty' of the royal free chapel from its foundation. The parishioners of this 'peculiar' must have had their Altar in the nave of the Priory Church; and there can be little doubt, from the persistent tradition of a dedication to St. Catharine, preserved in that of a modern Church on the site, that this was the Altar of St. Catharine." In the enclosure of what is called Old St. Catharine's, still stand ruined arches, thought to be the remains of the small parochial Chapel of St. Catharine adjoining the Priory.

The present parish of St. Catharine was formed sometime after the dissolution of the Priory. The Church, now called Old St. Catharine's, was closed when the beautiful new Church of St. Catharine on Wotton Hill, at the N.E. end of the parish, was consecrated. Then it seemed the sentimental link of St. Catharine's Chapel serving a suburban district would be preserved, for it was a semi-suburban parish. The creation of a new parish and Church at Longlevens (St. Mary's Wotton Without) formed mainly out of St. Catharine's parish, but taking in parts of Churchdown and Barnwood, has taken away from St. Catharine her old suburban district. It is now no longer the suburban Church whose boundaries reached to Churchdown, and so preserved the link with the old days when Churchdown looked to the Priory of St. Oswald for spiritual ministrations.

Churchdown was made an Ecclesiastical Parish about 1550. It comprised 4,075 acres. A Perpetual Curate was appointed, or as we should say to-day, a Vicar, but there was no resident Vicar until a much later date.

The TITHE of Churchdown. A portion of the tithe appears to have been sold and it passed into the hands of lay impropriators. The greater portion of the tithe of Churchdown, Norton, Compton Abdale, and several other

parishes which St. Oswald's Priory held, was granted to the new See of Bristol to form part of the endowment a few years later. The advowsons (the right of presentations to the livings) were vested in the Dean and Chapter of Bristol. A stipend of £20 per annum for the Curate of Churchdown (perhaps for the Curates of the other two parishes also) was a charge on the Dean and Chapter of Bristol. This appears to have been the sum allocated to Churchdown by St. Oswald's Priory in former days. This sum was paid until 1862. The Bristol Chapter then compounded with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, namely, they handed over to them all their tithe and church lands in return for a fixed annual payment. The stipend of £20 was then paid by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as a charge on the tithe which they had taken over. In 1894 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners transferred this tithe to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester, in exchange for certain lands on the Cotswolds, as part of their endowment. The stipend has been paid since that time by the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester as a charge upon their acquired tithe. (Unfortunately for the Vicars of Churchdown the amount was always £20, although the value of money decreased so enormously.)

Now we have this strange arrangement. The Dean and Chapter of Bristol hold the Advowson of Churchdown, and the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester are the Impropriators of the Tithe.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COURT HOUSES AND OTHER HOUSES.

There are six old Court Houses. Some are occasionally called Manors.

Elmbridge Court.

This is on the Horsebere Brook, near the Gloucester and Cheltenham road. The name is derived from "Thelbroeg," meaning a plank or timber bridge. The word occurs in Cartularium Saxonicum, where bridges are referred to in various parts of the country.

There was evidently a "Thelbroeg" over the Horsebere brook where it crosses the Gloucester and Cheltenham road—that is certainly an old road or track.

Mr. W. T. Swift says, "The first Court House was built in the reign of King Athelstan, *circa* 924-940." There is a reference to it in the York Registers of Archbishop Murdac, where it is spelt Telbrig (1147-1153).

A modern farm house now stands on the site of the old Court House. The Moat still remains. It is some 12ft. across and contains water, which in places is 8ft. deep. The Moat surrounds the house, except on the South side where it has been filled in sufficiently to permit a roadway to the house. The Drawbridge was on the S.E. side of the house. Until some years ago a large Plane tree stood close to the house, near the present entrance, and the bole of this tree was pierced by iron staples used in raising the Drawbridge. This aged tree became hollowed and dangerous and was cut down. The decayed hollow trunk is now nearly level with the ground.

It seems probable that there was a mill on the Horsebere brook, near the Court house, for in the Gloucester Corporation Records we read that Durand of Elbrig (Elmbridge) and William the Miller witnessed a deed, and in 1228 a grant of land to William the Miller of Elbrig, formerly by Thomas the Miller, is recorded. This may refer to the mill higher up the brook at Hucclecote, not far from the footbridge leading to the Chosen Hill path. There was a mill there at the time of the Domesday Survey.

Pirton Court.

At the lower end of Pirton Lane is Pirton Court, a moated house. The moat has now been filled in completely, and a farm house has replaced the old Court house. Some 60 years ago the moat round the house was plainly distinguishable. Mr. W. T. Swift states in his book, " In addition to the inner there was also an outer moat, and in the space between the moats cattle were driven for safety during times of civil discord."

In the York Registers of Archbishop Murdac (1147-53) Preriton is mentioned.

In the Corporation Records of Gloucester there are many references to Pirton Court from 1180 to 1623, in ancient deeds and records. In one, 1220 A.D., Reginald of Periton, is styled Sir Reginald of Periton, Knight. Although the references are not of general interest they clearly show that Pirton Court was important in the early days of Churchdown.

In Norman times it is spelt Periton or Perton, which is derived Pere (pear) ton (town) Perhaps perry, as well as cider, was a popular local drink.

Parton Court.

This is on the North side of Parton Lane, near the Railway Station. Traces of the moat can still be seen on the East side of the house. The house was probably rebuilt in Tudor times, and reparation work at various times has changed the architectural character of the building. Here, it is said, Prince Rupert lodged during the siege of Gloucester, 1643, and one room is still called " The Prince's chamber."

Some interesting things were discovered in 1930 when a long trench was dug to connect the house with the main drain—curious flag-stones of large size and certainly old, broken pottery and a few coins of 17th century. The special interest centres on " the base of a pot," which Mr. C. F. C. Hawkes, of the British Museum, said was certainly Romano-British, and most probably third century. This suggests strongly that Parton Court was in occupation during the Roman period, and quite possibly that this site has been occupied since that time.

Brickhampton.

This Manor is mentioned several times in the Corporation Records of Gloucester. The spelling of the word varies, *e.g.* Brightam tunn, Brithampton, Brighgleton, and Briccinton.

In the Register of Archbishop Zouche of York, 1342-1352, it appears as one of the hamlets or members of Chirchedon—Elmbrig (Elmbridge), Brithampton, Piriton (Pirton), Hoke (Noke), Hoclicote (Hucclecote), Woodhoclicote (Wood Hucclecote).

There is fairly clear evidence that this house was surrounded by a moat. It is certainly of ancient date. Here again it is clear that the house has been re-built and altered many times. One strange thing is that the boundary between Churchdown and Down Hatherley passes through a part of the house premises. Evidently since the boundary was made the building has been extended on the Hatherley side.

It is interesting to note that the house once belonged to Sir Robert Atkins of Sapperton, who wrote a history of Gloucestershire. He was a Knight of the Shire in 1685.

The Noke.

This is on the South side of the Hill, on the Churchdown and Hucclecote Lane. It overlooks the field where the old Roman Villa stood. The name means "Atten Oak" —"At the Oak." It is mentioned in the Corporation Records of Gloucester. Names of occupants of the house occur in connection with wills and deeds. In 1220, William, son of Henry of the Hoke (Noke); 1250, John of the Hoke; 1300, Henry of the Oak. In 1302, John of the Oak holds the office of Prior of St. Bartholomew Hospital, Gloucester. A will dated 11th July, 1375, of Joan of the Oak will perhaps be of general interest. (Extract from Mr. W. T. Swift's Book): "Her body to be buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Gloucester. To the mother Church of Worcester she leaves 12d. To the High Altar of St. Nicholas' Church, 6d. To the building of the Chapel of St. Mary in the same Church, 6d., and to a light in the same Chapel 3d. To the roofing of the same Church, 4d. To each chaplain of the said Church, 2d. To the parish chapel of the same Church, 3d. To the clerk, 1d. To her mother,

a robe of bluet, a double cloak with hood, and her best chemise (interula). To Margery, her daughter, two pieces of silk veils, a wool cloth, a brass pot, 6 silver spoons and a mazer. If the said Margery die within half a year of her mother's death, then the above legacies to her are to go to the Curator of the Church of St. Nicholas."

Sydney Dobell lived at the Noke in 1848, and there he wrote " The Roman."

Zoons Court.

This is on the S.W. side of the hill. It is an old homestead; to it were attached the Oyster Shell cottages. The meaning of the word Zoons is a little doubtful. It stands on a vein of sand, and place names on these veins of sand generally have a connexion with the sand. For example, Sandy-Croft, Sandy-Well, Sandhurst, which in some old documents is spelt " Sonshurst." Mr. W. St. Clair Baddeley told me he thought that " Zoons " and " Sons " were really the same and that they meant " Sands." It seems a reasonable solution.

An elaborate tombstone which once stood in the churchyard (now it is incorporated in the South wall of the Church) is in memory of John Cummins of Zoons Court, 1689, and of other members of his family. (See note on the Church.) It shows that the owners of Zoons Court were people of substance in 17th century.

The origin of the name " Oyster Shell Cottages " is not known.

The Great House.

This is now called the Manor, but it is not a Manor House. It was built about the end of 16th century or early 17th century. Of the building of the house there seems to be no record. There is an interesting story, still told, that Sir Walter Raleigh built the Great House and sometimes resided there. Another version is that he often visited it. Although Churchdown would be proud to claim even a faint connection with that famous man, we can only say, " We really do not know. We should like to think the story a true one."

It certainly was once a great house. It stood in a large enclosed ground. One entrance to it was in the Brookfield Road. It was also approached through an avenue of Lime trees from near the Sugar Loaf Bridge—the last of these old Lime trees was cut down a few years ago. Two fine old Holm oak trees stood about 100 yards to the East of the house, some may remember them, they were removed for garden purposes. The late Dr. Smithe propagated some of the acorns, and one of the descendants of the trees still flourishes in the Vicarage garden. The house is now divided into separate tenements; it would require an expert to give a picture of the original building.

Bigland, in his history of Gloucestershire, 1791, says: "The Great House and the largest estate in Churchdown, was in 17th century owned by the family of Wyndowe of Gloucester. It was sold towards the end of 18th century to R. Rogers, Clerk."

(For reference to the Wyndowe family see note on the Church.)

Smaller Farms.

Some of the smaller homesteads that we know to-day are old. Drew's Court, still sometimes called "The Tithe House." Draggots Court. Upper Pirton Farm. Parton Manor. Parton Farm. The Evergreens Farm, where the respected family of Pumfrey lived for over 200 years; the last representatives living there were Mrs. Henry Pumfrey and a son and daughter. Mrs. Pumfrey died at the age of 99 years; she was a dear old lady who superintended the "Butter-making" almost to the last. At her death the Pumfrey's long connection with the Farm ended.

These last two farms mentioned are approached by a side road from Parton Lane, called "Butter-Milk Lane"; there is a thatched cottage at the entrance. That charming old world name takes us back to the distant past.

Cottages.

Near the Farms were labourers' cottages. Many of the cottages to-day, old though they are, show signs that they were not the first to be built on those spots. Thatched roofs, with few exceptions, have gone. The Grotto Cottages, now

demolished after being condemned as unfit for habitation a few years ago, disclosed timber several hundred years old. These, no doubt, were the cottages in which the labourers of Parton Court used to live. The Folly Cottages (the name suggests ancient date), would also be attached to Parton Court.

Old cottages in various parts of the village tell the same story. Those around Brickhampton, some few on the Gloucester and Cheltenham road, some more in the centre of the village, in Brookfield Road, those opposite Drew's Court, several on the Green, and the Oyster Shell cottages.

The Old Inns.

The Old Elm is generally thought to have been built by T. Thache in 1695. It was most likely re-built by him at that date. Probably a very old hostel stood there, dating back to the days when Churchdown was the centre of an old and important barony—dismembered some 400 years ago! The stone bearing the name T. Thache, 1695, was removed from a chimney and placed at the front of the house in recent times when reparation was being done. The family of Thache lived in Churchdown for many years. They occupied a house on the south side of the Vicarage garden. It was painted red, and was very quaint in style, it had a fine oak staircase with wide balustrade in it, and possessed spacious cellars.

This old inn has now been demolished and a modern hotel has been erected.

One Thomas Thache was Curate of Churchdown 1736-1741.

The Old House at Home.

This is no longer a licensed house. There may be a long story behind it, but it seems to be lost. It is a picturesque old house, and one hopes its days are not numbered.

The Hare and Hounds.

This inn was re-built about 45 years ago. The sign "Hare and Hounds" is certainly an old one.

The Sugar Loaf.

Mr. Swift said he had heard that there was a small inn or beer house near the Railway Bridge, in Pirton Lane. Its sign was "The Sugar Loaf." The Inn has gone, but the old sign has given the name Sugar Loaf to the bridge.

The Green.

Generally, the Village Green plays an important part in the life and story of a country village. In Churchdown I do not think it was ever a village centre. It is quite a small piece of ground on the lower slope of the hill, skirted by the road which runs round the hill to Hucclecote, but has a charm of its own. It is Common land, but grazing rights are claimed by the cottages around it. I never found any reliable information about it. It is said there was once a bowling green there, but it would be difficult to locate a possible position for one.

Perhaps when Chapel Haye was enclosed (the old centre of the village), this smaller piece of land was left as Common land, and in time was called The Green.

The old Alms Houses, which stood alongside the road at the entrance to the Green, were condemned as unfit for habitation and have been removed. Some of the cottages around it may be a few hundred years old.

The old School House, now occupied by Mr. F. Trinder, should be specially noted. School was held there from 1740 for some 150 years, and a small playground in the field below, known as "Minchin's Mead" was fenced off. It is a picturesque old thatched cottage. An expert architect without hesitation says it certainly dates from the latter part of 16th century, and possibly somewhat earlier. The original fireplace recess, and the remarkably large flue, suggest the first half of 16th century as the date. The original size and appearance of this old cottage have been retained, and although a few internal alterations have been made to comply with modern requirements, the windows, the internal walls, the massive cross-beams, and the staircase are as they always have been.

This old Churchdown cottage has acquired a wide reputation, and people from America, and from various parts of England visit it every year.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARISH OF CHURCHDOWN AND ITS BOUNDARIES.

It is interesting to note that for a long period, nearly 200 years, Churchdown was included in the City of Gloucester.

King Richard III., when visiting the Western Counties, conferred special privileges upon Gloucester; perhaps in the hope of gaining popularity, for the violence of his usurpation of the throne had lost him the support of the mass of the people.

A Charter of Richard III. dated 2nd September, 1483, directed the Burgesses to elect a Mayor and incorporated the Burgesses of the town of Gloucester in the name of the Mayor and Burgesses; authorised the carrying of a sword before the Mayor in the town and liberties, and empowered the Burgesses to elect for themselves twelve Aldermen who shall execute within the town the same offices as the Aldermen of London did in that City. It also declared that the town of Gloucester and all the villages and hamlets in the Hundreds of Dudston and King's Barton, which were then in the County of Gloucester, were to be wholly separated from the said County from the Monday after the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, next to come, and to be incorporated and known as the County of the town of Gloucester.

The City of Gloucester then comprised an area of 45 square miles and included Badgeworth, Barnwood, Brockworth, Churchdown, Brookthorpe, Elmore, Hartpury, Highnam, Hatherley, Hempstead, Lassington, Hucclecote, Matson, Maisemore, Norton, Sandhurst, Tuffley, Upton St. Leonards, Whaddon, and Witcombe.

The Visit of Henry VIII. and Queen Anne to Gloucester.

Mr. W. T. Swift, quoting from an old book of ordinances in the possession of the Corporation of Gloucester, tells us that on the memorable visit of Henry VIII. and Queen Anne (Boleyn) to Gloucester, "The Mayor (John Fawkener), the Sheriffs (Thomas Payne and Richard Edwards) with the aldermen all clad in scarlet robes, and accompanied by 100 burgesses on horseback, met the royal

pair at Churchdown on Saturday, 31st July, 1535, and brought them with great solemnity to their lodgings in St. Peter's Abbey. That on the Monday following the Mayor and Sheriffs had an audience with the King in the Abbey Churchyard (now the College Green) and presented him with ten fat oxen, worth one and twenty pounds, for which he gave them loving thanks. On the morrow they gave the Queen a purse of gold, which she likewise graciously received."

The "COUNTY of the CITY" returned to the COUNTY of GLOUCESTER 1662.

In 1662 an Act of Parliament was duly passed and enacted in which it stated that Whereas the two Hundreds of Dudston and King's Barton were by Charter of King Richard the Third, in the second year of his reign, separated from the County of Gloucester, of which they were before a part, and the town of Gloucester with these two Hundreds united into one County, and since called the County of the City of Gloucester, which has been very prejudicial to the Inhabitants of the said Hundreds; Be it therefore enacted That from and after the first day of May next, the said TWO HUNDREDS and all the Inhabitants thereof and all parishes and places within or part of the same, shall be returned unto and remain part of the County of Gloucester for ever.

It does seem strange that after nearly 200 years such a radical change was made for altogether inadequate reasons. The people of Gloucester protested against the two Hundreds being separated from their City, but failed.

It is probable that King Charles II. intended to make Gloucester suffer for opposing his father during the Great Rebellion. Perhaps it implies that the villages and hamlets around Gloucester supported Charles I. when his forces besieged the City. We know that many of the officers of the King's army were quartered at Matson. Prince Rupert, the Commander of the King's forces, is said to have lodged at Parton Court.

No doubt many royalists were quartered in Churchdown but there is no mention of Churchdown recorded. We know that "Gloucestershire was in a sorry plight; impoverished by civil taxation and military contributions; pillaged now by Massey's hungry and ragged soldiery, and

now by Rupert's roystering troopers, till there was not a head of cattle to be found between Gloucester and Cirencester; its towns captured and recaptured, its churches used now as fortresses and now as prisons; in every village of any size a garrison, and hardly a parish which had not at one time or another been the scene of bloodshed." (Hyett.)

The Parish Boundary.

After the Dissolution of St. Oswald's Priory, Churchdown became an Ecclesiastical Parish. It comprised 4075 acres. The boundary at that time was clear. Natural lines, like roads and streams, and boundaries of Farm properties of old days were followed. Since then alterations have been made. In 1859 Hucclecote was made a separate Parish, and about 1400 acres were taken from Churchdown. That boundary is rather complicated, it is difficult to understand the purpose of those responsible for making it.

When the Civil Parish of Churchdown was delineated, the Ecclesiastical boundaries were not followed, and a curious and complicated position has been set up, *e.g.* the old Church is in the Ecclesiastical and Civil parishes; the cottage and part of the Churchyard are not in the Civil parish. The same applies to several cottages and a good deal of land, *e.g.* the Noke Cottages and some others.

A further alteration was made when the parish of St. Mary's, Wotton Without (Longlevens), was formed; another piece of Churchdown was taken away. Then Elmbridge, one of the old Court Houses of Churchdown, passed to St. Mary's, the new parish.

The result is that the ordinary man living in those areas has a difficulty in understanding what his position is, in which parish he is living, and what are his rights as a parishioner!

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHARITIES.

Like most old parishes Churchdown has the benefits of certain endowments, left by our predecessors, to be expended for specified charitable purposes. These are commonly called the Charities. There were seven, but two are lost.

The Henry Wyndowe Charity is the largest and most important. It is solely educational, and is the foundation of our Schools.

The School.

One Henry Wyndowe was Curate of Churchdown 1741-1772. However, it does not seem possible that he endowed the Schools. He was the son of William Wyndowe of Tiberton, Co. Gloucester.

Our benefactor most likely lived at the Great House, and owned a large estate in and around Churchdown.

"Henry Wyndowe by his will dated 13th December, 1734, devised to John Stephens, Robert Stanford and William Stanley, and to their heirs (at the decease of his wife), his house and lands at Badgeworth, Starton (Staverton) and Boddington. The house and premises being called the Rydings, occupied by William Hopton; also another house and premises at Churchdown occupied by Widow Chapman; also another tenement and premises at Churchdown, occupied by John Chamberlayne: upon trust that they and their heirs, &c., should out of the yearly rents of the said properties pay the sum of £20 annually to such person who should be appointed by them, to teach and to keep a school at Churchdown and instruct children to write, read and cast accounts. The Trustees were to allow the Schoolmaster to occupy the premises then occupied by Widow Chapman. If the Curate of Churchdown should desire to keep such a school the Trustees were to appoint him. They were also to pay £5 annually from rents received to a woman who was to reside in the cottage occupied by John Chamberlayne, and instruct infants (children under six years of age) to read and girls to knit, &c." (W. T. Swift's book, p. 65.)

The house and premises called The Rydings is a farm with about 52 acres of land. On the site a new farm house

and buildings have been erected; it is now known as Trehale. The Wyndowe Governors receive a rent-charge of £25 from the property.

"The house occupied by widow Chapman" is on the Green. It is now occupied by Mr. F. Trinder. It may be of 15th century date. Mr. Trinder has entirely renovated it, but all the old features of the house are preserved.

"The house occupied by John Chamberlayne" was in Parton; the house "Summer-well" is built on the site.

The conditions of the will were carefully observed. The School on the Green for boys and girls under a master, and an infant school at Summerwell under a mistress, were carried on satisfactorily.

In 1815 a report says, "from twenty to thirty boys were attending school."

The Education Act of 1870 necessitated drastic changes. The old school buildings were condemned. A new school had to be provided.

The Governors of the Wyndowe Charity obtained the permission of the Commissioners of Endowed Schools to sell the two old schools and land adjoining, and to use the proceeds of the sale towards the cost of a new school. The Commissioners at that time transferred the Charity known as Mrs. Blunt's Charity, to Educational purposes, and it was amalgamated with Wyndowe's Charity. There were to be six Governors of the Charity—two co-optative, three elected by the Churchdown Vestry every five years, and one by the Badgeworth Vestry. The school was still to bear the name of Wyndowe's School.

The Governors, the Vicar (Dr. Smithe), and the parishioners were successful in carrying out the scheme. The site was given by E. L. Newman, Esq., and vested in the Wyndowe Governors. The School and Master's house were designed by the late Mr. F. S. Waller, and built by Mr. A. King, both of Gloucester. The cost, £1,350, was defrayed by subscriptions, grants from Church Societies, and from the proceeds of the sale of the old schools. It comprised one large school room and a class room, the master's house and playground. It was opened 5th January, 1874, and Mr. W. T. Swift was appointed Master. The attendance was then less than 60.

For eight years it was a Voluntary School, supported by the Government grant, subscriptions, and by the Wyndowe endowment. In 1878, owing to the difficulty of raising sufficient money for maintenance, it was handed over to the School Board. The Governors guarded their Trust. The School buildings were let to the School Board at a nominal rent of five shillings per annum for use during school hours. At other times the Church had the use of the school, *e.g.* to hold Sunday School on Sundays, and it was licensed by the Bishop of Gloucester for Church Services—this continued until the Church of St. Andrew was opened in 1904. The Governors retained their endowment, which is still used for the benefit of the school in accordance with the specified directions of the Trust. The last work of the School Board was the addition of an Infant Room, ordered by the Board of Education.

In April, 1903, the School passed automatically to the County Council Educational Committee. It is under the local supervision of six Managers—the C.C. Committee appoint four, and the Parish Council two.

Since then there have been several additions and improvements at the School. In 1905 an acre of land was purchased by the C.C. Education Committee: the playground was enlarged, a school garden added, and all was fenced with stout iron rails. Then a Manual Room was added.

In 1931 the C.C. Education Committee decided to make it a Junior School, *i.e.* for children under 11 years of age. The older children are now taken by omnibus to the Senior School at Longlevens.

The School has maintained high efficiency under the Head Masters: Mr. W. T. Swift, 1872-1914; Mr. F. C. Phillips, 1914-1931; Mr. H. A. Lane, 1931, who still holds the position.

Few schools have gained more Scholarships at Secondary Schools than Churchdown. The handicraft, which is one of the special features, equals any school in the County, and attracts many visitors. The School is regularly used by the students of the College of Domestic Science, and by St. Mary's College, Cheltenham, for teaching practice and observance.

The Wyndowe endowment, bequeathed over 200 years ago, provides many accessories, so helpful to a school, but not supplied by Government grants, *e.g.* prizes, half fees to scholars for Secondary Schools, &c.

Giles Cox Charity.

Giles Cox lived in the parish of Sandhurst in the reign of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. By his Will dated 9th year of Charles I. he left to his executors a sum of money to be used for the purchase of some freehold estate. The executors purchased an estate called The Hill House, Upton St. Leonard's, at a cost of £1,034. The rents of this property were to be distributed to some 25 parishes around Gloucester in the proportion directed by the donor. Churchdown's share was the largest—£6 13s. 4d.

It was originally ordered to be distributed in gifts of money to the poor of the named parishes. When the Charity Commissioners advised the sale of the property, they directed that the money should not in future be distributed in gifts but used in connexion with some provident club. The money was used for many years to provide a bonus on members' subscriptions to a Clothing Club. Some years ago it was considered that the Clothing Club had fulfilled its purpose and was no longer needed. With the consent of the Charity Commissioners, the Committee decided that the money should be applied in support of the Churchdown District Nursing Association. This is still continued.

Richard Holford Charity. THE ALMSHOUSES.

By Will, dated 20th August, 1664 (proved 29th March, 1668), Richard Holford bequeathed—

> (in accordance with the wish of his father, Richard Holford, who intended to make the bequest himself, but he died in 1655—a flat gravestone in the Church records his death)

FOUR COTTAGES, known as ALMSHOUSES, situated on the Green, Churchdown, for the use of " four poor old people " of the parish, " To be called by the name of his father, Richard Holford's Almshouses." He also gave and devised one acre of meadowland in Hatherley, and five acres in

Parton Field, " the rents and profits thereof for the benefit of the poor people settled in the Alms Houses."

These Alms Houses have been occupied in accordance with the conditions of the Will for over 200 years.

In 1918 the two thatched cottages were condemned as unfit for habitation. The Trustees had no money available for rebuilding, and so, with the consent of the Charity Commissioners, they were removed. The site was used as extra garden for the two remaining houses.

The lands at Hatherley (in 1913) and in Parton Field (in 1919) were sold on the advice of the Charity Commissioners. The proceeds of the sales were invested.

The total income now is :

	£	s.	d.
£165 7s. 1d. 3½% Consol : Stock ...	5	15	8
£25 14s. 1d. 4% Canada Stock ...	1	3	0
	£6	18	8

Recently the two remaining Almshouses have been condemned, and are declared to beyond repair.

The demolition of Almshouses, where for so long a few of the old parishioners have found rest and contentment during their declining years, is indeed distressing. Confidently the Trustees have made an appeal for funds to replace them. It is an appeal that should have general and generous support. This Charity, we hope, will be preserved.

The Rev. W. Stansby's Charity.

The Rev. W. Stansby, of Badgeworth, by his Will 3rd March, 1704, left certain lands and tenements to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, for the time being, the Vicars of Badgeworth, Brockworth, Churchdown, Staverton, Cheltenham, Charlton, Leckhampton, and their successors, for ever on trust; that they should out of the rents and profits of the said estate pay to his trustees of the parish of Badgeworth and Great Shurdington the sum of £5 yearly, and to the trustees of Churchdown £3 yearly, and all the residue of the said yearly profits he gave to the trustees of Cheltenham, to be applied by the trustees of each parish to

the apprenticing of one or more children of honest day labourers to some trade or occupation.

These directions have been carried out. When Hucclecote was separated from Churchdown, two-fifths of the £3 was assigned to Hucclecote.

Mrs. Blunt's Charity.

Mrs. Blunt, gentlewoman, left 4 acres of pasture, in Hatherley Mead, the rent of which to be used for the benefit of poor labourers and widows not receiving alms. It was formerly administered in the same way as Giles Cox's Charity. In 1872 the Endowed Schools Commissioners transferred this Charity to the purpose of education. It is now amalgamated with the Wyndowe Charity. The land was sold some years ago and it is now invested in Government Stock.

Jeremiah Michael Charity.

This was an annuity of 36 shillings, given to the Minster and Churchwardens for providing "nine monthly Sacraments in the Parish Church"; the particular days were mentioned, and a good deal of detailed instruction is given. Date 1721. The Will is copied in the Church Registers. The Charity has been lost sight of altogether.

William Smith's Charity.

By Will dated 4th June, 1785, William Smith of the parish of Churchdown, gave a tenement situate at Churchdown, near to a close of land called Green Leys, also another messuage lying next to the road leading to Gloucester, such property to be subject to the payment of £1 4s. 0d. yearly to the Churchwardens of Churchdown for the use of the Minister provided he should administer the Sacrament in the Parish Church once every Calendar month, according to the Will of Jeremiah Michael. This bequest has lapsed.

The Church of St. Bartholomew.

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

The old Church on the Hill is the one famous and ancient building still remaining in Churchdown. Owing to its position on the Hill, it stands out as the great and picturesque feature of the village. Unfortunately there is no record to tell us when it was built, and why that site was selected.

There are numerous legends, but they do not give us any reliable evidence. The only sure evidence of its date is to be found in the stones and masonry of the Church. The worked stones in a building, and the way in which the masons placed them, tell the expert architect and archaeologist fairly accurately the date of a building. Experts who have examined the Church and the site, say definitely that they do not see traces in the foundations or in the walls of a pre-Norman building.

Parts of the North wall, and those somewhat imperfect carved stones, which now form part of the South doorway arch (inside) can be dated as 12th century. Almost identical carved stones are at Berkeley Castle, and the date of that work is recorded to be 1180.

It is then clear that the first Church can be proved to be a building of the later part of the 12th century; probably between 1160 and 1180. Evidence of anything earlier cannot be found.

"One's first impression of Churchdown," says Dr. Murray, "was that, for some reason or other, the village had slipped down the hill leaving the Church behind." Certainly during the middle ages many Churchdown folk lived some way up the North side of the hill; there is the Village Green, and the old School was there. However neither he nor I think this can account for the selection of the Church site.

I think we need to consider for a moment a few things about the Churchdown barony at the time we date the Church, say 1175.

Roger du Pont l'Evêque was Archbishop of York 1154 to 1180. He was a man who left his mark in English history. He and Thomas Becket of Canterbury had been rivals, we might say, from early days, when both were

monks at Canterbury. Disputes between them constantly occurred when Roger ruled at York and Thomas at Canterbury. Roger always took the King's part in his quarrels with Thomas. Roger invariably asserted his dignity and insisted on the privileges of his office. For example, Roger insisted on his right to carry his pastoral cross erect in his barony of Churchdown and at the Priory of St. Oswald. Thomas said that only he, as Archbishop of the Southern Province, and the Bishop of Worcester as the Diocesan Bishop, had the right to do this. Roger maintained his right, and continued the practice.

We can imagine that on a visit to Churchdown he felt the little Saxon Church at Chapel Haye, and the small one at Hucclecote, were unworthy of the business centre of his barony. He would note that an important Church at Brockworth (known as the Crusaders' Church) was being built, and his church in comparison would be insignificant. So he determined to build a Church, that would be a landmark, and from far and wide would denote the importance of his barony. That site on the hill would fulfil this purpose admirably; "A Church that is set on a hill cannot be hid." He was a man of wealth, and a munificent Church builder—"The most munificent that ever presided over the See of York." No doubt after consultation with the Prior of St. Oswald's (the Priory would not have had the funds for the purpose), he decided to build the Church. Probably the original purpose was not for it to supplant the little church below; the site on the hill was not really suitable for a Parish Church. It would be the central Church of the Barony, and used on special occasions. Most probably he also intended it to be a Pilgrim Church; pilgrimages to shrines were much in vogue in those days; and the offerings of pilgrims helped to support the Church. The choice of St. Bartholomew as Patron Saint rather suggests this. The cult of St. Bartholomew since the time of Rahere (the founder of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Smithfield, 1120) was becoming popular and would be likely to attract pilgrims. Before that date only two or three churches in England were dedicated to St. Bartholomew.

This seems to me to be quite a probable answer to the question "Why was the Church of St. Bartholomew built on the Hill?"

That original Norman Church we can clearly outline for ourselves if we carefully examine the walls and stones of the present building.

It was evidently a small Church, comprising the present nave space with the South wall where the arcade now stands, and attached to a Norman tower at the West. At the East end there would be an apse, in which the Altar stood; connecting the apse and the nave was a large Norman arch. There are several large voussoirs (wedged stones which formed part of an arch) to be found worked into the masonry of the walls, *e.g.* in the present South wall, and also in North wall outside ; these were almost certainly part of the large Norman arch. At the west end was a tower, occupying much the same space as the present tower. The entrance door was on the North side where the present doorway stands. There was probably no porch, only a finely carved doorway arch, the voussoirs of that arch now form the arch of the present South doorway. The shaft pieces now in the North wall of the Chancel, are thought to be parts of the original doorway arch. The roof would have been somewhat higher than the present one. There may have been an entrance door on the South side, but no traces of this are left.

It may be worth while, and of some interest to try to picture the Consecration of the old Norman Church on the hill some 750 years ago.

We may suppose that a number of people assembled at Chapel Haye—probably on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August. Archbishop Roger leaves his lodging arrayed in a fine cope and robes. A procession is formed. The Cross-bearer with Cross carried erect leads, followed by representatives of Churchdown proper and of the Barony. The Prior of St. Oswald and the Canons, the Archbishop and his Chaplain are at the rear. As they wend their way up the Hill they chant Psalms. The door of the Church is locked; within is a deacon alone. As the Archbishop is there, they three times process round the Church. Each time they pass the door the Archbishop knocks with his staff saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in." At the third knock, in response to the Deacon's call "Who is the King of Glory ?" the Archbishop gives the word "Even the Lord of Hosts He is the King of Glory." The door is opened.

He then heads the procession as it moves into the Church chanting "Peace be to this house and to all that dwell therein. Blessing be given unto them in their coming in and in their going out." Then followed the Service of Consecration. A ceremony similar in outline and in much of the detail, to the Service, which some of us remember, for we took part in it on the Eve of St. Andrew's Day, 29th November, 1905. Then the Church of St. Andrew, in Chapel Haye, was consecrated by the Right Reverend E. C. Gibson, Lord Bishop of Gloucester, as a Daughter Church to that old Church of St. Bartholomew on the Hill.

Some 750 years ago it is, but we "are united with it not only by the fellowship of the historic stones which compose the material Church, but by the words of the Psalms which have ever been on the lips of Christian people, and even (what some may be surprised to learn) by the very tone and words of the prayers that were used. There is more union than controversial people think between English Churchmen of the twentieth century and those of the twelfth."

The Rebuilding of St. Bartholomew's Church.

Again we must turn to the "Stones" of the Old Church, and from them try to learn what changes in the fabric were made during its long history. They clearly tell us that the Norman church was enlarged, and almost entirely rebuilt after a life of a hundred years or so. There are no written records of this work. The Stones point to late 13th century or early 14th century.

We remember that the Archbishops of York held the Barony of Churchdown, and were responsible for the Churches in it. We know that Archbishop Walter de Gray was at York from 1215 to 1254. Although the Stones suggest a little later date, he seems to be the most likely man to have carried out this work. He visited his Gloucester Barony more frequently than other Archbishops. The York Registers record 8 or 10 visits from him to Churchdown during that period. It is known that he re-organized the Priory of St. Oswald; he enforced a more stringent rule of life upon the members of the community, and reduced the number of residents. It seems likely that he would at the same time turn his attention to the outlying Chapelries.

At Churchdown he would recognise a difficulty, for the Priory had to serve the three Churches there, *i.e.* St. Bartholomew's, Chapel Haye, and Hucclecote. Perhaps the two small Churches were in bad repair. He determined to preserve one Church to serve the two places. The Church on the Hill, being midway, was the chosen one. There is a tradition that the Church was built to serve the two places. Until fairly recent times the aisle was spoken of as "The Hucclecote Aisle." Then, too, there is the almost historic gibe of the Hucclecote man, who stood up in the aisle after hearing the Response "And make Thy chosen people joyful," and called out "Aye, but what about we Hucclecote people." These seem to confirm the tradition.

Probably some of the fittings and even some stones would be removed from the Chapels to St. Bartholomew's. There may have been some resentment among the inhabitants at the change. This would account for that legend "The people wanted a Church below, but the Devil took the stones to the top of the hill!" A similar legend is told of several Churches, but it always means that a Church was removed from one site to another contrary to the wishes of the people, and the one responsible for the change came to be spoken of as the devil.

Another possible reason for the enlargement may have been that, as a Pilgrim Church, it had become popular, and had attracted many pilgrims. In which case their offerings may have provided a portion of the funds required for carrying out the enlargement of the Church.

All this is simply surmise! The "Stones" suggest fifty years or so later—perhaps when Archbishop Romeyn ruled at York.

When we look at the Fabric of the enlarged Church it is clear that the general outline of the building would be much the same as it is to-day. The great addition was the South aisle. It was impossible to extend on the North side owing to lack of space; that would be the usual plan. This aisle extends the whole length of the nave. The arcade was inserted in the Norman wall to open out the nave to the aisle. The porch with a new entrance door and the parvise (Priest's room) above, and the entrance, by spiral staircase, from the nave, were added. The tower remained. The changes at the East end are more difficult to state definitely. It would seem that the large Norman arch was removed; the

present chancel appears to be of later date, but the East window looks like the work of 14th century, and it does not appear to have been inserted after the chancel was built.

The fabric of the Church in mediaeval days seems to have been carefully maintained. At the East end of the chancel stood the stone high altar, raised some 3 feet above the level of the nave. Another altar stood at the East end of the aisle, or the Ladye Chapel (so called as late 1586 in the registers).

The Font should be noted: Dr. Alfred Fryer describes it as "a fine example of a 14th century font." The base on which the font now stands is said to be made of stones from the old Norman Tower.

The Piscina was found in the wall of the South-East end of the aisle. It was repaired and placed in its present position near the altar in 1880.

The Holy Water Stoop is still built into the wall by the North entrance door.

There probably would have been two or three bells in the Tower; they disappeared.

One other piece of Church furniture of mediaeval times is the old chest, with three locks, now standing in the aisle.

The interior walls were brightened with mural paintings. Traces of somewhat crude, but interesting designs, on the North wall, and over the arcade in the South aisle were just visible some years ago but have now practically faded away.

Coffin Lids. Four fine coffin covers (stone), now built into the outside walls of the Porch, were inside the Church at this time. They probably marked the burial place of Priors or of Canons of St. Oswald's. They suggest that the Church and Churchyard were favourite burial places.

The Parvise, or *Priest's Room.* The Parvise, entered by a newel staircase from the nave, would be in regular use at this time, by the officiating Priest from St. Oswald's Priory. No doubt he sometimes spent a night there. The chamber is of interest; the doorway is lancet shaped, central height is 5ft. 9½ins., width 18ins. Evidently there was once a heavy door, secured by a strong beam of wood inside. The left hand spiral staircase and the strong door seem to

suggest that the room could be used on occasion as a Church sanctuary, or refuge, in which the Priest could place for a time a "hunted" man. The dimensions of the room are 8ft. 9ins. by 11ft. There are two small windows in the North wall; the lower is the older, and has grooves for glass; the higher one is larger, but has no glass grooves. It is unusual to find windows one above the other in a Parvise. It has been suggested that there was a sleeping chamber above which would account for the two windows, but the height of the room is not sufficient for that. There is an open fire-place, and a low chimney; there are no signs that a fire was used there—unless charcoal was used. There are still some interesting graffiti to be seen scratched on the walls. The South wall was much broken when the nave roof was renewed and lowered about 1602. No doubt it was thought then that the room was of no further use, and so it was left derelict. The window opening on the nave, which gave the Priest a view of the two altars and the church, was blocked up. The window was re-opened and glazed in 1880.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, 1534 AND AFTER.

After the final breach with Rome in 1534, the suppression of the Monasteries, which quickly followed, and the Reformation in the Church, many changes came.

Churchdown was made an ecclesiastical parish (including Hucclecote, of course). A Minister, or Perpetual Curate was appointed. From that time onward Churchdown had its own "Vicar," as we say to-day. Apparently he did not reside in the parish; he frequently had the charge of one or two other parishes also.

The Church was dismantled of all those marks of "Roman Superstitions," as the ultra protestants termed them. This was during the years of extreme protestant activities. The stone altars, and altar furniture, the rood and probably the bells, would be removed. There is no record of the date of this. But we know that John Hooper was Bishop of Gloucester 1551-5. He is a man who still bears an honoured name in Gloucestershire, and is revered because he bravely faced martyrdom in St. Mary's Square, Gloucester, 9th February, 1555, for what he believed to be the truth. He was by conviction a zealous reformer. With zeal and great determination he worked to re-organise his diocese. He preached four or five time a day, and interviewed and examined all his clergy. But with almost fanatical zeal he insisted on the removal of all signs of what seemed to him to be Roman superstition. This accounts for much disfigurement of Churches!

Some years later it appears that the Church was in bad repair.

Gloucester Diocesan Records, 1563, referring to Churchdown:—

> "Item, the saye that the bodie of the Churche and Churche yard are not decentlie kept as the ought to be. Also the Church house is in decaye; the have no sufficunt curat, but reader only, the benefice being worth C a yeare."
>
> 1571. "The Churche in decaye, lacketh bible in biggest volume. Monished to repair the Churche by the feast of All Saints and to procure a bible by the feast of St. Bartholomew."

Interior of Church.

No doubt some repairs were done in accordance with this order. The main reparation work was done some thirty years later. The tower was rebuilt in 1601. A stone in the tower arch records:

"THIS BELHOWS WAS BVYLDED IN THE YEERE OF OVR LORDE GOD 1601."

The nave roof was renewed, and lowered about 2ft. 6ins., for some reason. The oak timbering is said to have been procured from derelict ships in Gloucester Docks. Although the timber is sound it is obvious that new oak was not used. Probably three bells were placed in the tower; the three old bells are of this date approximately.

It seems that in the early 17th century there were many gifts of fittings and furniture to the Church. The handsome carved oak pulpit and sounding board bear the date 1631. Some of the old carved oak, now forming seat-ends, is of that date; the letters "A.W." on one piece seem to suggest that it was given by a member of the Wyndowe family, who lived at that time at the Great House (now called The Manor), and owned a large estate. The Wyndowe family were generous benefactors. On the South wall of the chancel is a marble tablet erected to the memory of Sir Robert Austin who died in 1643. The epitaph says: "He was honest and generous." Perhaps it implies that he was a benefactor of the Church; we do not know that he ever resided in the parish.

The altar chest, now standing in the South aisle, is of this period. If used as a Communion Table, as seems probable, it teaches, perhaps, what was the manner of administering the Holy Sacrament at one period of the Church's history. Much internal renovation in accordance with the ideas of the times was carried out. New seating accommodation would be provided; the dilapidated high pews remembered by the old people were relics of 17th and 18th centuries.

The silver chalice and cover—date mark 1628—is a beautiful and prized treasure, and is still used. It is in fine condition.*

*(A replica of this was presented to the Church in memory of the late Rev. H. E. Hodson, who resided for some years in the parish, by his nephew, the Bishop of Tewkesbury, and his nieces, the Misses Hodson.)

About the year 1641, during the Great Rebellion, the church was desecrated by Puritan fanatics. The floors of the chancel and the East end of the aisle were broken up and thrown into a hole in the churchyard. According to the Puritans' ideas chancels should not be raised above the level of the naves of churches. Several encaustic tiles, 14th or 15th century date, and evidently part of the floor paving of the chancel or lady chapel were found in the churchyard. They are now in a case in the tower chamber.

Reparation work after this desecration damage might be termed "patching up." The repairs to windows, the floor, and seats were clumsily done, and were evidently the work of unskilled men. This would also apply to repairs carried out in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

During this period many memorials were placed in the church and churchyard. Interments in the church as well as outside were made.

A Wyndowe family vault is under the nave floor near the pulpit. "Erected by Fream Wyndowe, Esq., 1721."*

There is another Wyndowe vault adjoining the South outside wall of the chancel. There have been interments there in fairly recent years, after a long lapse, namely, Major William Freame Wyndowe, 1895; Surgeon-General Samuel Jardine Wyndowe, March 1919; and Major William Thomlinson Wyndowe, his son, August 1919—the last male descendant of the Wyndowe family. The vault is now closed, no further interments can take place.

There are a number of flat floor stones with inscriptions in various places inside the church. Whether they all mark the place of interment is doubtful. They may have been brought there from the churchyard and used as floor paving. Some are mentioned in Bigland's History of Gloucester, 1791, *e.g.* "Richard Holford died March 30th, 1655."

The Grave Stones inserted in the South outside wall were placed there some 80 or 90 years ago, when the square tomb in the churchyard collapsed—on the advice, it is said, of the then Archdeacon of Gloucester. It is in memory of

JOHN CUMMINS, ZOON'S COURT, 1689.

Other inscriptions on it are dated 1685, 1689, 1706, 1714.

*(The covering floor of this vault was cemented over in 1901. It was done at the cost of Dr. Jardine Wyndowe.)

On it are four lines of Horace, Lib. 2, Ode 3.

" Omnes eodem cogimur : omnium
Versatur urna serius ocius
Sors exitura, et nos in aeturnum
Exilium impositura Cymbae "

which may be translated : " We are all being driven together (like sheep) to the same fold : the lot of all is being shaken in the urn, and sooner or later will leap out, and embark us on the perpetual banishment of Charon's boat."

This use of Horace on a Christian tomb is a fair example of 17th century heathenism.

From returns in Diocesan Records we learn that in 1750 " out of 450 inhabitants there were 7 papists and 5 presbyterians." 1815 : " Church accommodation 300. Two services—at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Congregation, 120 morning, 220 afternoon. Communions 4 per year. Communicants 40. Seats 16 open (free). The authorised version sung. The sick visited. Children attending the School 71. Day School 25. Sunday School 71. Two Meeting Houses—Wesleyans and Lady Huntington. Two free Schools. 4 Alms Houses."

1854. FREDERICK SMITHE, LL.D., F.G.S., &c., was appointed Curate and four years later, Vicar. He held that position until his death in 1900. He was the first resident Vicar. Hucclecote was made a separate Parish in 1859.

He was keenly interested in the old Church; he wrote a carefully prepared history of the Church for the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (*Transactions* Vol. xiii). He found the church in bad repair, internally and externally. For various reasons he could not at once carry out reparation work. It was not until 1879-80, when the chancel roof was in danger, that much was done. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were then liable for chancel repairs, undertook the thorough repair, under the supervision of their architect, Mr. E. Christian. The old roof was replaced by the present substantial one of waggon shape. The floor was raised to its original level and paved. Two choir stalls were added; the end of one is of the old oak, and that design has been carefully followed throughout. At the same time the interior of the Church was repaired. The old high pews were removed from the aisle; some of the old seats are preserved in the nave. The floor was repaired. The old singing gallery at the West end of the

aisle, which, much dilapidated, was removed, and that space was railed off to be used as a vestry. The entrance porch was repaired and paved.

Major Will: Freame Wyndowe visited Churchdown, the home of his ancestors, about 1890. He was much interested in the old Church. He offered to place stained glass in the East window. So the three lights were filled: St. Bartholomew in the centre, St. James and St. John on either side. "In memory of a family who once lived at Chosen Hall." He also repaired the family vault outside the chancel wall. He expressed a desire to be buried there.

At the same time Dr. Smithe placed three figures representing "Faith, Hope, and Charity," in the three lights of the South window of the chancel, in memory of his wife—Elizabeth Smithe. That window is different from the others in style; it is "square headed," of Tudor period, and was probably inserted at the time of the restoration in 1602.

Some pieces of the old oak were preserved in the tower chamber. These were used to construct the present altar (the old altar, made of deal, was in bad repair), in 1901. The old oak also provided panels for the altar at St. Andrew's, 1904. Mr. R. W. S. Merrett made both these altars, gratuitously and very efficiently.

1923-4. Beyond slight reparation work nothing further was done to the structure of the Church until 1923. Then it was found necessary to undertake extensive repairs. The stone tiled roofs of the nave and aisle leaked badly, and, owing to subsidence, dangerous cracks opened in the walls of the chancel adjoining the nave. It looked as though the chancel might part from the church and slip down the hill!

The Diocesan Surveyor, Mr. F. Waller, was consulted. He reported "to put the church in sound weather-proof condition the church roofs must be entirely stripped; timbers and plates repaired; then felted and lathed and retiled, using as far as possible old tiles or similar stone tiles and nailed as the position is so exposed."

This, and other necessary repairs to external and internal walls, were efficiently carried out by Messrs. Thos. Merrett & Son under Mr. Waller's instructions. At the same time the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester had repairs done in the chancel. The foundations were strengthened with quantities of cement concrete, particularly at the East

end, where there had been a serious subsidence. The whole chancel was tied to the main building by steel rods.

Those responsible for the approach to the church, the Parish Council and Mr. J. H. Jones, had the paths, gates and fences repaired.

The church was re-opened by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. A. C. Headlam, on Sunday, 3rd May, 1925. It was a memorable day.

In 1931 it was found that the Bells were in a dangerous condition and could not be safely rung. For a considerable time no bells were heard from the hill, save the small treble bell for Services. Then a great effort was made to raise money for their reparation. It was thought that a 6th bell should be added to make the peel more complete. This was made possible by the gift of a new treble bell by the Misses Auden, in memory of their Mother, who lived for some years at Caer Glow. The work was carried out by Messrs. Gillett & Johnston, Bell Founders, Croydon. The old bells were not re-cast, but were re-conditioned. Now they ring on "improved methods."

The cost, some £270, was mainly defrayed by parishioners. It should be noted that there was a gift of £30 from Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Poole, in memory of their son, Edgar George Poole, a Churchdown ringer, who was drowned at Ottawa, Canada, 27th August, 1932.

The bells were re-dedicated on Sunday, 8th October, 1933, by the Right Rev. E. J. Palmer, D.D., Assistant Bishop of Gloucester.

It was a real joy to the parishioners to hear the old bells ringing from the Hill again.

"The bells are a ring of 5, having a tenor weighing 14 cwt. and a total weight of 43¼ cwts. They were cast by 4 different founders at various dates.

No. 1 cast by T. Mears, 1841.

No. 2 cast by John Rudhall, 1827.

Nos. 3 & 4 are about the same date as No. 5, which is dated 1578."—Gillett & Johnston's Report.

With the new treble bell, 4 cwts. 1 qr. 19 lbs., the total weight is now 47 cwts. 2 qrs. 19 lbs.

The reparation work done at the old Church in fairly recent years is a proof of the interest and affection that Churchdown people have for their ancient heritage. The large sum of money contributed by parishioners and friends interested in the preservation of the ancient church is very significant. There were grants of £50 from Warneford Ecclesiastical Charity, and of £25 from the Diocesan Board of Finance for the reparation of the church, but the greater portion came by *straight giving.* If the cost of enlarging the Churchyard is included, something like £1,200 was raised between the years 1924 and 1933. Throughout the Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council keenly supported and helped the cause.

A church in this exposed position, with constant subsidence and denudation going on, will frequently need attention. But, as it has passed through so many dangerous periods, we believe that Churchdown people in the future, as in the past, will preserve their heritage of an ancient church.

The legacy recently received under the will of the late Miss J. M. Purnell will make the work less burdensome. During her residence in Churchdown, Miss Purnell showed her sincere affection for the old Church. Weather rarely prevented her from worshipping there. By her work and generous gifts she supported every effort made for its maintenance.

The Parish Registers, commenced in 1563, are in fairly good order, and have been well preserved. The writing in the first two volumes is particularly good. The title of volume I. is: "1563. The Register booke of Chursdowne beginninge Anno Domini 1563. Wherein are contaynede all Weddings, Christeninges and Burialles there until the 12 daye of Maye 1598."

per Mr. Thomas Colerick, ibidem Curad.

The names of the Curates are recorded.

The names of the Churchwardens from 1567 to 1746 are also recorded, but this list is not quite complete—280 names are given out of a possible 358.

The Churchyard.

This, we might say, is the Vantage Spot of the Hill. From here the grandest views are before us. A few fir trees that have weathered many a storm, a little weather-battered

perhaps but still strong, and a fine yew are within the hallowed spot. (The yew, it is said, was planted on the grave of a schoolmaster, hence its vigour!) Trees on the land around add to the beauty of the site. The old Ash should be noted, for it is evidently a good lightning conductor and has saved the church more than once; it still bears the scars of past storms.

The graveyard was never formally laid out. The grave spaces seem to have been fitted into the pockets of the rock on which the church is built. It is supported by a dry stone wall. Until about 50 years ago the Church House was just outside the churchyard.

The charm of the spot has been recognised in recent years. The late Mr. F. S. Waller, Diocesan Surveyor, who knew every churchyard in the County, expressed a desire to be buried at the West end of Churchdown churchyard. He was buried there 23rd March, 1905.

There are interesting grave stones, and an unusually large number of rhymed inscriptions. Mr. W. T. Swift deciphered some 60 or 70 of these. He said, "There are one or two favourites repeated with slight variations." Of these, two will suffice:—

Pain was my portion, physic was my food,
Groans my devotion, druggs did me no good,
Christ my Physician, knew which way was best,
To ease my pain and sett my soul at rest.

Another of the better class moralises thus:

Howe'er unwilling, yet submit we must
To God's decrees, and His decrees are just.
He gave us life, when He demands His own
Shall not the Christian say "Thy will be done."

There is a quaint inscription to John Brown:

He on this Hill for years dig'd stone,
And now to meet the Lord is gone.

There have been three extensions of the Churchyard during the last fifty years. Two small portions of the adjoining land were given by the late Capt. Child, of Chosen Hill House. In 1925, Mr. J. Champion gave a much larger piece of ground. The whole area is now about 1½ acres.

Perhaps these two incidents will be of interest, and should be told in connection with the Churchyard.

(1) *A Burial at Three Times.*

In a letter I received from Mr. W. B. Coopey of Bentham, dated 28th October, 1903, he said, "My grandfather, Mr. William Coopey of Bentham (formerly of Churchdown), who died in 1820, was buried at three times in your Churchyard. His legs were taken off for cancer, first one and then the other. He had coffins made for them, I have heard my father say (he was a boy then, being born in 1807). About two years after this he died and was carried on men's shoulders all the way from Bentham to Churchdown Hill. You will find his tombstone underneath the Yew tree with the old doggerel on it 'Afflictions sore, etc.'"

He also said there was a burial "at three times" at Badgeworth about the same time. He did not know the name.

(2) *A Sexton's story.* (Mr. Henry Morris.)

One bright Spring morning an aged and infirm sportsman made his way up the hill for the last time to see the hounds from the vantage ground near the church. He was thrilled as he saw the hounds in full cry move off. There was a tear in his eyes as he tottered back through the churchyard. He sees the sexton, and hails him. "Sexton," he says, "when I die, and my time is nearly done, you are to see that I am buried just there. From that spot I shall hear the cry of the hounds I love so well, and I shall see them running round this hill and down the vale. But mind you, when I am buried and you have filled in the grave, you must give me three tally hoes. I will see that you get a 'crown' for doing it." Just to satisfy the old gentleman the Sexton replied, "Well, well! I'll do my best."

The following winter the old sportsman died. The Sexton dug his grave in the chosen spot. He was buried on a cold, wet Saturday afternoon. It was dark before the grave was quite filled in. "Best leave that till marnin, tho' it be a Sunday." Next day a thick mist enshrouded the hill when the Sexton finishes his work. As he picks up his tools a stranger comes out of the mist and says, "Good morning Sexton, you have made a good job of that." "Yus Sur, I think that be a' right. Wa'll, marnin sur, I must be out of the road afore Parson finds me; 'e be terrible partic'lar about grave digging of a Sunday." "Wait my friend, you have forgotten something. Don't you remember what you promised the old gentleman." "La! Sur, I conna' do that;

it be Sunday marnin', and Parson will hear me." "But you cannot break a promise given to a dead man." "Wa'll, here goes." He gave the three "tally hoes." The stranger handed him a small sealed packet containing five shillings, and vanished into the mist as mysteriously as he had come. "Wa'll of all the rum things I've knowed this beats the lot," muttered the Sexton as he moved off.

The Church House.

This is known as the Sexton and Caretaker's Cottage. The house is now within the Churchyard, but remains an unconsecrated spot in the enclosure.

A house has probably been there as long as the church has been on the hill. The repairs, re-building, and patching up that have been done to it, make it impossible for any but an expert to attempt to tell its story. There it stands to-day, not out of keeping with its surroundings, and still marking the site of the Old Church House.

The direct approach to the church and hill in old days was by three sets of stone steps, running straight up from the old road, commencing near the Beech tree. Old inhabitants still remember some of the steps. They are now completely covered.

The winding path, which makes the steep ascent easier, was made in 1893. Trees were planted and they now give a welcome shelter to the "approach." This improvement was mainly due to the interest and generosity of our respected parishioner, Mr. J. H. Jones, of Barrow Hill. In the Minutes of a Vestry Meeting held 3rd April, 1893, the hope is expressed "That the pathway and trees, and other matters connected with it, might be regarded by the inhabitants as a slight memorial of the late Anthony Gilbert Jones, of Hatherley Court, Down Hatherley, and also as a reminder of the benefits which flow from our grand Colonial Empire and our kith and kin beyond the seas."

The approach and pathway are now Parish property. The Parish Council is responsible for the upkeep.

A right of way still runs through the Churchyard. When the winding path up the hill was made, it was thought that the path should be continued round the West side of the Churchyard to give a more convenient access to the hill. The old way through the Churchyard still seems to be preferred.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW.

Churchdown people, although they may have resented the building of the old Church of St. Bartholomew on the Hill in the very early days, had learnt to love that church, and, as its story proves, have made great efforts to preserve it, and to keep it as the Parish Church. However, as the population of the parish increased it was generally recognized that a church on a more convenient site should be provided.

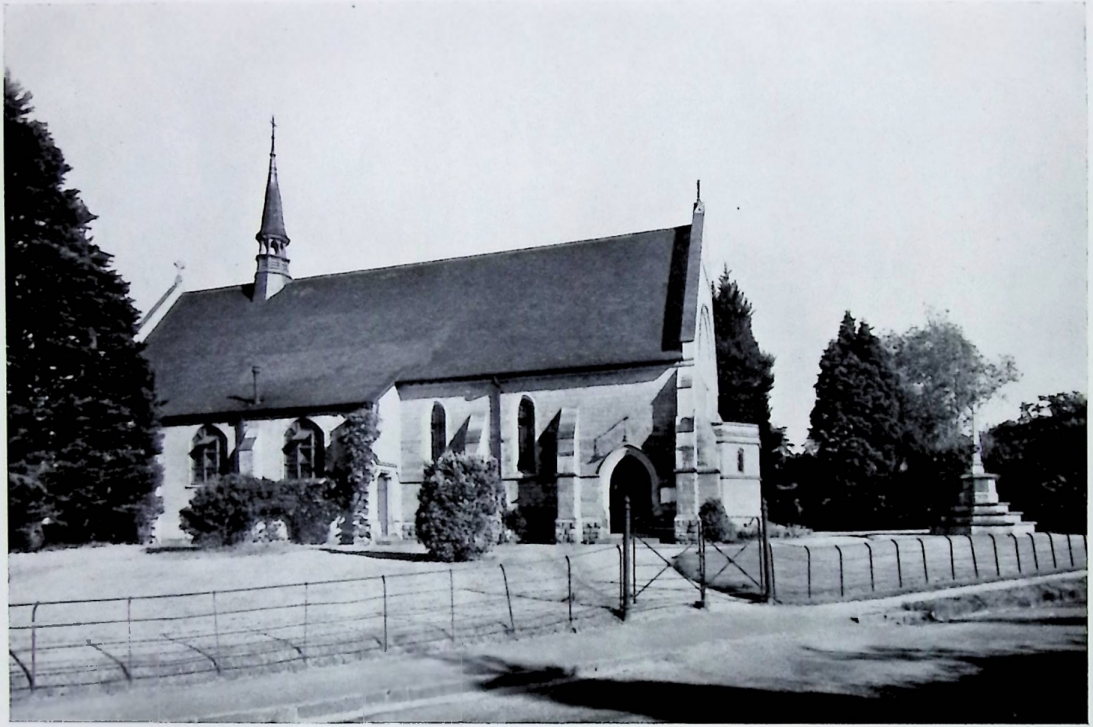
As a temporary measure only, the new school was licensed by the Bishop of Gloucester in 1873 for the purpose of holding a Sunday evening service there, and occasionally to be used for the administration of the Holy Sacraments. This was continued until St. Andrew's was opened in 1904.

When I was asked by the Patrons of the living (The Dean and Chapter of Bristol) to be Vicar of Churchdown in 1901, they impressed upon me that the first need of the parish was a new church; so also did the Bishop of Gloucester (Dr. Ellicott). I had often visited Churchdown in my young days, as I was at Cheltenham College as a boy.

When Mrs. Cooke and I came to look round the parish, I remember that, as we walked from the Station and came to the corner of Chapel Haye, I said, "I think that must be the site of the new church." I did not then know anything of the story of Chapel Haye and the little Saxon church that once stood there. I never changed that opinion.

On St. Andrew's Day (November 30th), 1901, a Parish Meeting was called to consider the question of a new church. It was decided that a substantial church must be built. A Building Committee was then appointed. A little later the Churchdown Land Company generously gave the site on Chapel Haye corner.

The difficulty of raising the large sum of money was in due course overcome. There was then no Diocesan Fund to help in church building, and only a comparatively small sum was received from Church Societies. Fortunately at that time building was far less costly than it is to-day. So although the building is still unfinished, we have a substantial and serviceable church.



THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW.

In the first issue of the Parish Magazine—January, 1908—there is this brief summary of what was done in six years :—

St. Andrew's Day, 30th November, 1901. A Meeting was held at the School, when it was decided to build a new church, and to obtain a site forthwith. £400 5s. 0d. was promised in the room.

31st March, 1902. Plans submitted by Mr. W. B. Wood (selected by Mr. A. B. Prothero, of Cheltenham, out of six sets) were accepted, and working drawings were ordered.

21st December, 1902. The contract of Mr. A. J. Dolman, of Gloucester, was accepted. Sums received or promised to date, £936 10s. 9d. Guarantees for £700 signed.

3rd March, 1903. First sod cut.

15th July, 1903. Foundation Stone laid by the Right Hon. Sir John Dorington, Bart., M.P.

25th April, 1904, St. Mark's Day. The church was opened and Dedicated by the Venerable the Archdeacon of Gloucester (E. C. Scobell), in the absence of the Lord Bishop owing to illness.

29th November, 1905, the Eve of the Feast of St. Andrew. The church was consecrated by the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Gloucester (Dr. E. C. Gibson).

St. Andrew's Day, 1907. The debt was paid off.

	£	s.	d.
The cash cost, exclusive of site and generous gifts for furniture and fittings	3400	3	8

The funds raised were—	£	s.	d.
From Churchdown Parish	2294	9	7
Friends outside Churchdown ...	585	14	1
Grants from Church Societies ...	610	0	0
	£3400	3	8

The Church Building Committee had not, what we might call, a free hand. No one could say, 40 years ago, to what extent the parish would develop. To build a complete church was therefore inadvisable. Their purpose was to provide as much of a permanent church as possible, and yet not to make it look more unfinished than was absolutely necessary. So the main body of the Church, from East to West, was built as a permanency. Provision was made for transepts, a Morning Chapel at the N.E. end, and a vestry on the South side in the place of the temporary one, at a later date. The addition of these would increase the accommodation by 150 or more. At present about 350 can be comfortably seated.

The design is simple, there is little ornamentation. The outline is generally considered to be dignified, and inspiring to the worshippers. It is lofty and light, and the acoustic properties are good. The East end is well raised; no part is cramped for space. The Sacrarium has a width of 18ft. and a depth of 15ft. The Baptistry is one of the striking features of the church. Its position in the West wall, an arcade, at once catches the eye, and emphasises the significance of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism as the first step in the life of a Christian.

Gifts to the Church.

(1) *The Altar.*

This was made and given by Mr. R. W. S. Merrett. Old carved oak from St. Bartholomew's was mainly used, in accordance with Mr. W. B. Wood's design.

N.B.—A lace superfrontal, Fair linen cloth, etc., for the Altar were given by Miss Cooke, a Missionary at Ramleh; they were made by Jewish Christians. The gift was intended to arrive in time for the Dedication Service, but the ship by which it was sent foundered in the Mediterranean. However, some months later a packing case was salved on the African coast—in it was the lace! In due course the small package arrived at Churchdown in perfect condition.

(2) *The Font.*

A beautiful 15th century Font. It has an interesting story. The late Mr. W. H. Hicks-Beach, of Witcombe

Park, Churchwarden of Witcombe, when visiting Lasborough, saw a fine old Norman Font lying in the churchyard—it had long ago been discarded from the church. He thought that Norman Font would be more in keeping with the Norman architecture of Witcombe Church than the 15th century one placed there. The Rector of Lasborough offered to give the old Font to Witcombe Church. The Rector and Churchwardens of Witcombe arranged that the Witcombe Font should be given to St. Andrew's, Churchdown, which was then being built. Thus our Font came to Churchdown. This Font is specially noted by Dr. A. C. Fryer, and there is a plate of it in his paper on Glos. Fonts. (B. & G. Archaeological Society, Vol. xli.) All will agree, I think, that it is quite in keeping with the Church.

Some five years later the Patron of the living of Lasborough, Colonel Holford, heard that the old Font of Lasborough had been given to Witcombe. He at once requested that it should be returned. After much arbitration it was returned. Colonel Holford gave a replica of the old Font to Witcombe. So Witcombe has the Norman "replica" and Churchdown retains the 15th century one.

(3) *The Organ.*

The Organ was built by Nicholson and Lord, of Wolverhampton, according to the design and specification of the late Rev. H. E. Hodson, who raised most of the money to meet the cost. There was a grant from the Carnegie Trust. The organ is considered to be a very good one, although small. Some years ago the Insurance Policy was increased as the valuer said the price to replace it would be double the original cost.

It may be of interest to recall the fact that when the organ was complete at the works it just escaped destruction from a bomb of a Zeppelin by a few yards!

(4) *The East Window.*

This was placed there in 1920 by the late Mr. H. M. Cardew, Mr. C. Streatfeild-James, two former Churchwardens, their families and friends, in memory of their sons—Captain G. Eric Cardew, M.C., and Captain Ralph Streatfeild-James, D.S.O., two Churchdown men who fell in the Great War. It represents in bold figures, the Call

of St. Andrew in the two central lights, and St. Michael and St. George in the side lights. It is the work of Percy C. Bacon, London.

(5) *Lancet Windows.*

The two Lancet windows in the Sanctuary represent St. Oswald and Aethelflaed—both of whom have a traditional connection with Churchdown. They are in memory of Mrs. Zoe Brierley who for some years lived at Barn Hay. They are the work of Jas. Powell and Sons, London: placed there 1934.

(6) *The War Memorial Cross.*

It stands in the Churchyard, West of the Church. It was erected April, 1921. On it are inscribed the names of the 29 Churchdown men who fell in the Great War. It was designed by the late Mr. W. B. Wood of Gloucester. The local branch of the British Legion took a great part in raising the money to defray the cost, £360. It is an elegant monument and is quite in keeping with its surroundings.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GLOUCESTER AND CHELTENHAM ROAD MISSION.

It may be of general interest to recall how this Mission started, in the days when a few cottages on the lower part of Parton Lane and on the main road might be described as an outlying hamlet of Churchdown.

In 1885 Mr. Champney, a solicitor of Gloucester, rented a room in a cottage from Mr. Mark Dancey, and held Sunday evening Services there and a Sunday School.

In 1888 Mr. Mark Dancey built a room over his Forge. For some 16 years Mr. Champney conducted a Sunday Service and Mr. Dancey a Sunday School.

In 1904 Mr. Champney left the district, but with the help of some young lay readers from Gloucester, Mr. M. Dancey carried on for some years.

In 1910 the Vicar and Churchwardens rented the room from Mr. Dancey and took over the control and responsibility of the Mission. Sunday Services and Sunday School were held regularly for 20 years. The room was also used for Church social purposes. Soon after Mr. Mark Dancey's death the room was put up for sale. By that time the district had greatly increased, and the room no longer met the needs of the Church work. A great effort was made to provide a new room. The generous assistance of the little "church colony," subscriptions from parishioners generally, and help from the Bishop's Church Fund, made it possible to commence building quickly. A site was procured at the lower end of Parton Lane. In a few months the room was built. It accommodates about 200. It can be readily adapted for Church Services and social gatherings.

The Mission Room was dedicated by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese 12th October, 1933. He then said: "The old Parish Church and the larger Church of St. Andrew still remain the central places of worship, but owing to the distance it is necessary to have a place nearer at hand, where people can meet for prayer and instruction, and particularly for a Sunday School for the children. It is also essential to have a place where people can meet for social purposes."

In connection with the Mission Room we naturally recall the earnest and zealous work of the late Mr. C. Streatfeild-James (he was Parish Churchwarden for 20 years) and of Mrs. Streatfeild-James. For years he was mainly responsible for the conduct of the Services; both had the welfare of the Mission at heart.

The Mission Room to-day is a Church outpost in that rapidly growing district.

THE METHODIST CHAPEL.

This is a substantial stone building, well equipped, with seating accommodation for about 200, was completed in 1903. Before this, Services were held in the large barn adjoining Drews Court Farm, which had been fitted up for the purpose. This was not a suitable building, so the congregation determined to build a permanent Chapel. The Churchdown Land Company gave the site—perhaps it is a part of the old Chapel Haye ground. A substantial grant was obtained from the Wesleyan Centenary Fund, with that and subscriptions the necessary funds were raised—about £1,300. The Chapel was opened on 29th April, 1903, by Mr. R. A. Lister, J.P., M.P. The Dedicatory Service was taken by the Rev. T. Rippon.

It has been, and continues to be, a valued religious centre of the Methodists of the district.

EPILOGUE.

Churchdown retained its purely rural character until the latter part of the 19th century. The population remained round about four hundred for a long period. Agriculture was the sole industry. From a few entries in the Churchwardens' and Overseers' accounts we may conclude that parochial affairs were carried on much as in other villages.

Men, well known in their day, farmed here skilfully and prospered. Thirty years ago I often heard the old folk speak of the good old days, when "Squire" Thomas Lawrence owned and farmed Parton Manor (he first introduced a steam plough), Mr. Herbert Smith at Upper Pirton, and "Squire" Poppham at Elmbridge Court and Pirton Court.

The opening of the Railway Station in 1874, and good train service, we might say, revealed Churchdown to Gloucester and Cheltenham. The convenience of the situation, midway between the two towns, the charm of the Hill and the old Church, and the picturesque village appealed to the town residents. Soon it became a favourite resort, and tended to become a residential suburb.

When the modern requirements, like Drainage, Water Supply, Gas, Electricity, regular Omnibus and Transport Services, were supplied throughout the parish, rapid development—almost exploitation—began.

"Little Churchdown," as a well-known writer describes the village, tends to become an industrial centre. It now has two reservoirs on the hill to contain the water pumped from Tewkesbury to supply Gloucester and Cheltenham. It is the Joint Airport for Gloucester and Cheltenham. It has a large Rotol Factory, which employs hundreds of workers. This has necessitated house building on a vast scale in that area.

It is obvious that Churchdown, to a large extent, is under the control of Gloucester, and is dependent upon the City for most of its requirements.

Perhaps it means that a large area of the parish in due course will be absorbed, and again be included in the City, as it was 300 years ago. Even to-day the unique and

historic name of Churchdown is falling into disuse. The Airport and Rotol Factory, although entirely within the parish, do not bear the name. The old familiar lanes we see designated "Parton Road, Pirton Road, Innsworth Road, *Gloucester.*"

Some Farming is still carried on, but it is no longer an agricultural parish.

However, the Hill and the dear old Church remain. The Bells are still heard in the Vale, appealing to all around, like the Psalmist of old, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help," reminding us of the high purpose of life that God wishes us to fulfil in this world.

All who have appreciated and still delight in those beauty spots around the hill, and the fine trees—the Beech, the Ash, the Oak, and some Elms, old but still vigorous—must be anxious for their preservation. Lovely sites for houses are still available, and they may not escape the eyes of the speculative builder!

Churchdown, through the ages, has had a story full of interest and of some importance. It has played a part, if only a small part in the making of England. May it continue to be a beautiful spot!

That charming colloquial name "Chosen" not only reminds us of an almost ideal village "through the ages," but should inspire the Chosen people of the present and future generations to preserve the natural beauty of their heritage—the home in which they are privileged to live. Pride of home and its surroundings is a fine trait of character, and it may well be encouraged and fostered.